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THE

NUT-BROWN MAIDS.

THE

NUT-BROWN MAIDS:

OR,

THE FIRST HOSIER AND HIS HOSEN.

A FAMILY CHRONICLE OF THE DAYS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

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'DARK AND TRUE AND TENDER.'

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MDCCCLIX. 1859.

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LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS, CHANDOS STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

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IN pleasant remembrance of the great master who could do justice to Mary Queen of Scots' mighty rival, while Mary's face was, in his own words, 'familiar as that of the mistress of his youth or the daughter of his old age,' and Mary's sorrows were most dear to his generous sympathies — another compatriot of the beautiful and unfortunate Stuart Queen does not fear to pay a simple tribute to the story of good Queen Bess, since all that was mortal of the loyal Lee who was wont to celebrate the anniversary of her happy accession, is but dust under his effigy in the parish church of Quarendon, in Bucks.

The author wishes to acknowledge a weighty obligation to THOMAS FULLER'S *History of Cambridge*, ROBERT BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*, CHARLES KNIGHT'S *Old England*, COOKE TAYLOR'S *Romantic Biographies in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*,

(from the 'by-ways of History,') and LUCY AIKIN'S *Court of Queen Elizabeth.*

The author takes leave to remind the reader that the Puritans, in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, while the Act of Uniformity only existed in form—while they enjoyed a respite from their sufferings, and were in some quarters rather a dominant than a down-trodden party—though significantly styled Precisians, were not generally distinguished by the austerity and harshness which afterwards characterized them. They freely studied all liberal arts, and particularly followed the pursuit of alchemy.

TO ALL LOVERS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

October, 1859.

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THE

NUT-BROWN MAIDS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PLAYER.

QUEEN ELIZABETH had announced her intention of visiting her ancient town of Cambridge, warranted in doing so by various counts. Its venerable age, which claimed Henry Beauclerc as a student, and David of Scotland as an Earl; where learning flourished in spite of 'mischievous Montgomery' and the 'merciless fire;' where Hugolina, the devout wife of the Baron of Bourne, on her recovery from desperate sickness, dedicated a church to God and St. Giles, and caused her husband to endow it with half of the tithes of no less than twenty manors; and Pagan Peverel, standard-bearer to Robert of Normandy, founded Barnwell Priory, and raised its canons to the number of thirty, be-

cause he was then thirty years of age—an early period of life, truly, at which to make his benefaction; where the Abbot of Crowland worthily revived letters by the simple means of four monks—Monk Odo, betimes in the morning reading grammar to the boys at one of the clock; Terricus, 'a most witty and subtle sophister,' teaching the young men Aristotle's logic at three of the clock; Monk William reading a lecture in 'Tully's Rhetoric;' but the great Master Gislebert upon every Sunday and holy-day preaching God's Word unto the people. And this 'fountain' never ran dry, though more than once 'Mars frighted away the Muses—when Mount Parnassus was turned into a fort, and Helicon driven into a trench;' and even when Walter Bunk and his Brabanters did no more than destroy the town of Ely, 'the scholars had need of steady heads and strong brains, if able to study in these distempers, when loud drums and trumpets silenced the sweet but low harp of Apollo.'

A particular claim on Queen Elizabeth, besides the state and attainments of the University, lay in the fact that, as the climax to innumerable gifts from wealthy and pious spinster, dame, and widow, five out of the thirteen colleges and halls had been founded by illustrious women—Clare Hall, by Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster; Pembroke Hall, by sad Mary of Valentia, 'maid, wife, and widow in one day;' Queen's College, begun by Margaret of Anjou, with the strangely significant inscription on

the first stone, 'The Lord shall be for a refuge to the Lady Margaret, and this stone for a sign,' and finished by Elizabeth Woodville; and Christ's and St. John's, by Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby.

This lady has not only left behind her the needlework for which King James called at Bletsoe, but the by no means unwomanly trait of discipline, that, coming to Christ's College to behold it partly built, and, looking out of a window, and seeing the dean 'call a faulty scholar to correction,' she only said, 'Lenté, lenté!' 'gently, gently!' 'as accounting it better to mitigate his punishment than to procure his pardon, mercy and justice making the best medley to offenders.' Farther, it is recorded that Lady Margaret's father was John Beaufort, and her mother Margaret Beauchamp; so that, according to the rebusing of the old chronicler, 'fair-fort and fair-field met in this lady, who was fair-body and fair-soul, being the exactest pattern of the best devotion those days afforded, taxed for no personal faults but the errors of the age she lived in.' 'John, Bishop of Rochester, preached her funeral sermon, wherein he resembled her to Martha.' And collecting these scraps of evidence, we have a faint idea of the character and position of 'the Lady Margaret,' even of her bodily presence—large-featured, grave-eyed, in her chin-cloth, with her straight-falling pinners—though we may not see her image of gilded brass on her 'fair tomb of touchstone,' near her

son, the Seventh Henry, in the Chapel at Westminster.

Had Elizabeth revisited Cambridge later in her reign, she would have found in progress a sixth of those monumental gifts from gentle foundresses to thousands of foster-sons—the Sydney-Sussex College, erected by the bequest of Lady Frances Sydney, aunt to Sir Philip, and relict of Thomas, third Earl of Sussex. As it was, by the will of this testatrix Elizabeth received a loyal and loving token of her subject's intention, in a jewel 'like á star' of rubies and diamonds, with a ruby in the midst thereof, worth an hundred and forty pounds, having on the back side a hand delivering a heart unto a crown; accompanying the humble request of her highness for a mortmain to found a college, a petition which was graciously accorded.

Elizabeth's arrival at Cambridge was heralded by that of Cecil, who received from the University the customary offering—two pairs of gloves, two sugar-loaves and a march-pane. Lord Robert and the Duke of Norfolk were complimented with similar gifts; and finer gloves and more elaborate confectionary were presented to her Grace the Queen, and that by each of the colleges.

The only business transacted was the pleasant work of conferring the degree of Master of Arts on many noblemen and gentlemen—among them Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk; Thomas Ratcliff, Earl of Sussex; and Robert Dudley, Earl of

Leicester — to the latter, as High Steward of the University, special honour was shown.

Doubtless the maiden queen and her splendid train excited no small sensation among the surplices and hoods, the cloaks and pointed caps of the University. Doubtless she flashed bravely on her commons' sight approaching the fens and Camus with 'his hoary mantle and his bonnet sedge.' The absence of all shade would scarcely be felt by one who loved no relief in a picture, or minor key in music, and whose high heart swelled proudly as she advanced on one of her two capitals of learning, and cities of grave, reverend, rich, and beautiful palaces. Doubtless, though it was neither the midsummer fair nor the Sturbridge fair—then one of the most frequented in England — Elizabeth and her retinue wound through a great crowd, sparkling by the ruins of the old castle—some of the very stones of which her sister Mary gave to Sir Robert Huddleston, her first partisan after the proclamation of Lady Jane, to build his house at Salston—down Bridge-street and Trumpington-street; past the old hostels, and the new halls, by Peter's House, the first foundation, and Caius College the last. Elizabeth was no niggard of her countenance. She remained five days at the lodgings of the Provost of King's College, and at Trinity; and not only visited her father's endowment—whose chapel, with its vast canopy of exquisite tracery, its twenty-four Gothic windows, the designs of their painted glass, ascribed to Julio

Romano, is still the model of all that is princely—but Queen's College by the river, reminding Erasmus of his native Rotterdam by the sea; St. John's, so thronged with students that its members, 'when writing private letters, were wont to cover them with the other hand to prevent inspection,' involuntary it is hoped, from their neighbours on every side; to Maudlin, cut off on the north-west of the river, freed from temptation, but somewhat unequally situated, 'with a rose-garden on the one hand, and a smoky brew-house on the other,'—not one establishment omitted. Hearing now a Latin sermon, and then a Greek play—hailing Pembroke with the salutation, 'O, domus antiqua et religiosa!' 'O, ancient and religious house!'* and presenting to a pretty young man of the name of Preston a pension of twenty pounds a year for his good looks and his acting in the play of *Dido;* but it is with an English play and another player that we have to do.

In the great hall of Trinity a deputation of the grave doctors, masters, fellows, and students were playing a tragedy for the Queen's entertainment. Little need that these wise and weighty men should usurp the player's office; for although Will Shakspeare—'Gentle Shakspeare,' 'pleasant Willy'—was yet a brave and bonny boy, wandering by the river Avon, or stealing into the park at Charlecote, Nat Field and Green were already showing forth merrier

* Fuller.

humours than in general fall to the share of reverend seigniors; neither was there any mercenary bait to levity except from the Queen's bounty, the best professional remuneration being wondrously small. Was not an ample fee for a copyright eight pounds? Was not one or other player constantly figuring in gaol, and were not whole three of them, Philip Massinger of the number, petitioning at once for five pounds to bail them out of durance? After all, this episode of British history was heavy enough to excuse the absence of light pates and the employment of ponderous scholars; let it be duly remembered that women did not appear on the stage; and finally, it may be taken into consideration that it was more onerous, and possibly more courteous, to exert themselves on the Queen's behalf, than to set up puppets for her comfort and complacency. Certainly the display was not more unnecessary than the next day's dissertation and dispute, in which the big-wig of the sixteenth century found his Latin oration completely eclipsed by the classical discourse of Elizabeth, uttered at the prayer of her courtiers, and more than half to dazzle and astound the Spanish ambassador.

A rare scene! a rare sight! Queen Bess herself, Queen of the Sea, of the City of London, of English hearts, whom her contemporaries so feared and flattered, and her subjects so loved, and whom, in the course of time, against the testimony of Burleigh, Spenser, Sydney, Raleigh, against her bishops and

her merchants, against her statutes and her grants, against the lingering murmur of those queenly words, 'I am your Queen, what wouldst thou have with me?' so often addressed to peasant wench and boorish rustic, in spite of the justice and generosity which led her to tolerate many a liberty and forgive many a rudeness—as when she was openly addressed from the pulpit with the taunt 'that she who had been meek as a lamb was become an untameable heifer,' and contented herself with reprehending the divine for 'an over-confident man, who dishonoured his sovereign,'—in spite of the rough but genial humour which caused the true daughter of King Hal, when he was bluff, not brutal, to welcome in jest what she, a proud and wilful woman, would have resented in earnest to bloodshed, it has grown the fashion to traduce and abuse as a vain vixen, an unsated tigress. Poor Queen! poor woman! never mortal sacrificed more to maintain dignity and repute—never strong heart bled more freely from the wounds which its own hand inflicted; but—by the beauty and misfortunes of Mary, who would not refuse her volatile heart a keen, passing desire; by the deceitful love passages of the Greys; by the rumoured crimes of Dudley—meeting no reward; by the treason of Essex and the falsehood of his allies, thy grave was dug,—and on it is laid at last no wreath of laurel gemmed by a grateful people's tears, no token of reverence from foreign courts, once fain to bow at thy beck, no block from the wooden walls which

resisted the Armada, no missive of Protestant thanksgiving,—but the shameful willow of a betrayed woman's weakness, the burning, blistering aconite of a bitter youth's uncomely, unquenchable suspicion, jealousy, covetousness, and revenge.

But "'we will have no treason against Queen Elizabeth' here,—where she sits in the summer of her maiden dignity and virgin state, King Edward's 'sweet sister Temperance,' the woman Spenser will soon name, once and for ever, Gloriana, and describe as the huntress Belphoebe, with 'dredd majestie and awfull air,' and

> Ivoire forehead, full of bounty brave,
> All good and honour might thereon be read;

whom Shakspeare was to mark as

> A chaste vestal throned in the west;

of whom he was to prophesy,

> A most unspotted lily shall she pass to the ground,
> And all the world shall mourn her;

and in whose honour Hooker declared that 'it might deservedly be at this day the joyful song of innumerable multitudes, and the true inscription, style, or title of all churches as yet standing within this realm, 'By the goodness of Almighty God and his servant Elizabeth—we are.'' Whom Sydney and Raleigh were to serve and adore, before whom knights and nobles, corporations and commons, were ready to pour forth a stream of honest

laudations and hearty benevolences, should be safe. It is admitted that Lord Robert the Gipsy is already paramount, that his mistress has ere now imprisoned her loving cousins, that she whom Catholics style the 'Bastard,' hates the Catholic Queen Mary with a loathing, rooted hatred,—but lives to bid the noble Catholic Admiral, Howard of Effingham, lead her fleet in her greatest need, that she will perform on the virginals with more of martial clash than sweetness, nay, that she will yet dance corantos with a spirit and agility unbecoming her years; but 'Good Queen Bess' was a household word in her generation, and 'good Queen Bess' let her remain still.

Walpole has said that no portrait of Queen Elizabeth can be styled good from the excess of ornament, the profusion of jewels, in which the wise Queen chose to indulge; but surely there is a grandeur, grant that it is barbaric, like St. Sophia, in the very display he condemns—the huge ruff and huger farthingale, 'the bushel of fair pearls,' and that even when each goodly ruby-drop and diamond-set aglet had not its history—this was worn when she was feasted in the Temple; these were New Year's gifts from her suitors, Eric of Sweden, and the Archduke of Austria; or later in the day, 'the fine fan garnished with diamonds' which she flouted, the fair pair of virginals which she condescended to touch, the very gown and juppin she wore, and the fork and spoon of agate with

which she ate, were the anxious offerings of foolish Essex. Even in the midst of this lavish profusion of glittering stones on hair, stomacher, sleeves, and girdle, the personal traits of the great Queen were very far from vulgar. The fine proportions and regal carriage, the broad brow, the pale Roman nose, the piercing grey eyes, the tapering delicacy of the lower part of the face—as widely removed from sensual grossness in youth, as in age it approached the type of shrewish spinsterhood—the wavy, light brown hair, the small white hands. Alas! poor cheek—withered long before the heart lost its yearning for love akin to its own, poor falcon-eye—dimmed by many a tear of pique and pain, glazed and darkened at last with the horror of a bootless remorse.

No cloud was now on Elizabeth as she sat in her rank, her wit, her handsome person, and prodigal adornments, intelligently appreciating the piece and the players acting before her, and not hesitating to express her emphatic applause, while around her sat and stood a company only second to herself in interest and renown.

These gentlemen who trod in turns with equal ease their own halls, their ladies' bowers, the Queen's Court, the stricken field, the decks of their pinnaces, the alchemist's cells, and the low-browed chambers of the Tower. These full-grown men and women who indulged their passions like children, and hoped, and believed, and prayed through all. These splendid

gentlemen pensioners, the worst man with an inheritance of four thousand a-year—and such individual specimens of manhood! Lord Hunsdon, son of Lady Mary, sister to Anne Boleyn, first-cousin to Elizabeth, 'as he lived in a ruffling time so he loved sword-and-buckler men, yet not taken for a popular or dangerous person, his Latin and his dissimulation' being 'both alike—bad,' and 'his custom in swearing' making 'him appear a worse Christian than he was.' Nearer in affection, Lord Robert—so lately created Earl of Leicester, that he was still better known by his family title—with his high brow and his supercilious lip, his alleged profligate practices and mysterious philtres. Lady Catherine Grey had ere now knelt to him in vain, to beseech his intercession in the affair of her rash marriage with Lord Hertford. The poor, sweet, busy young heiress, Amy Robsart, had laboured uselessly in her household economy to promote her lord's interests and secure his gratitude. Her servants had all gone to that fair at Abingdon, and her blackening body had been found at the foot of the great staircase of Cumnor Hall—but Dudley gave her a lordly funeral at Oxford; and although 'Leicester's Commonwealth' or 'Parsons' Green Coat,' was to sound the *bruit* on this and other scandals, and the very stage was to echo with shameful words,

> The only way to charm a woman's tongue
> Is, break her neck—a politician did it.*

* *The Yorkshire Tragedy.*

The more respectable and honourable members of society whistled these rumours down the wind, as too dire and dangerous to be received; and one great heart refused to entertain them, as false and foul lies on her devoted servant—as who knows yet but they might have been. The absence of proof may leave some little charity for the Prince of Sophie, the Leicester who built an asylum for indigent old men, and who wrote thus of his young hero in the Low Countries—'If I could buy his life with all I have, to my shirt I would give it;' 'did never hear of any man that did abide the dressing and setting of his wounds better than he did;' 'his loving care for me;' 'his most resolute determination for death;' 'riding a long mile and a half on his horse ere he came to the camp;' 'not ceasing to speak still of her Majesty—being glad if his hurt and death might any way honour her Majesty; for her's he was while he lived, and God's he was sure to be if he died;' ending piteously, 'Well, I pray God if it be His will, save me his life; even as well for her Majesty's service sake, as for mine own comfort.'

Dismiss Leicester, and you have Norfolk, son of 'Surrey of the deathless lay,' and father of 'Belted Will;' Buckhurst, known in tragedy; and travelled Oxford, elegant and fierce, who brought from Italy the perfumed gloves—those scented with orange-flowers or jasmine—all the rage. Here, too, was 'painful Parker,' Elizabeth's first archbishop, who translated the whole Psalms in English metre, and

edited 'Piers Ploughman's Vision,' and sundry monkish chronicles, and, happily for his early prosperity, hunted out his beloved antiquities before he took to persecuting Puritans. Yonder swung Cumberland, the prince of Buccaneers—that same De Clifford who proudly wore the Queen's glove—dropped, some said, intentionally in his path—set in diamonds as a badge in his bonnet; and strayed poor Henry, Lord Arundel, when he was still a likely lover of too high a mistress, ere he dreamt of putting up masses for Philip's soldiers, or wasting his body with fasts and scourges, or dying behind prison bars; and laughed Egremond Ratcliff, the last of the Ratcliffs, earls of Sussex, who joined in the Northern rebellion, suffered the extremity of hardship and exile, attempted the life of the Archduke John, and perished as a traitor and assassin; and gossiped wily Pembroke and Winchester, who, in contradiction to Spenser's definition of courtiers,

> To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
> To spend, to give, to want, to be undone,

by being 'willows and not oaks,' prospered so well on 'the bare stock of their wits,' that it was calculated 'they got, spent, and left more' under several reigns 'than any subjects from the Norman Conquest to their own times;' and mused Sir Thomas Gresham in his merchant's peaceful cap and furred gown, as when he went to Antwerp and saw the model of the Royal Exchange; and managed Sir Francis Walsingham,

about to propitiate one of the colleges with the gift of the King of Spain's Bible; and watched Dr. John Dee of Mortlake—that credulous necromancer, that friend of good men and true, and connoisseur of books and plate, and borrower of other men's moneys, then in the zenith of his fame, just before Elizabeth herself looked into his magic mirror, and Cavendish inquired concerning the North-West passage, when casting horoscopes was a mighty telling trade, and emperors, kings, and nobles tested his skill, when men and maidens, pupils and apprentices, and Hungary horses were all of the household of the great chemist—a tall man, with a perpetual pondering smile, richly clad in scarlet, like one of the company of merchant tailors, or my worshipful Lord Mayor.

Of the Cambridge notabilities there is not space for more than one cluster. The aged Bullock, the friend of Erasmus, styled by him Bovillum; Whitgift, the fiery and aspiring Dean of Trinity, and his bitter foe—hectic and passionate Cartwright, at this moment full of vinegar at Elizabeth's preference for the pretty looks of the young man Preston over his school logic; Cartwright's fitting brother-in-law, young Stubbs, of St. Bennet's, all unconscious of the fate which caused him to write himself Scævola; and Anthony Bacon, unsuspicious, too, that his little brother Francis was to prove the Jacob to his Esau in the eyes of the great world; but without fail there was many another teacher, preacher, and clerk present, who deserved a niche in his country's temple.

'Now for the sunny eyes' of the women who looked upon these men. Some who rendered Elizabeth's reign illustrious had swiftly passed away; others were yet to enter into the brilliant company. By comparison, thin were the ranks of gifted and highly trained women of whom Elizabeth was but the representative. Devoted Margaret Roper had hung long ago on the neck of her doomed father, and retired to mourn him in solitude; peerless Lady Jane slept soundly after her bloody end by the side of him whose younger brother ruled as royal favourite; the second fair Jane Seymour, too, was dust and ashes long before she could witness the evil fruits of those midnight nuptials at which she had rashly assisted; Lady Catherine had pined and perished by Tower cell, and guarded manor—of that weary wedlock; and belated, brisk Lady Mary had given occasion to the jest that the smallest lady at court had married the biggest gentleman, and he but a porter of the palace. Mary Sydney had not yet appeared in the circle; Lady Rich was still to prove the Stella to Sidney's Asphodel; and Frances Walsingham, at once the Pastorella of Spenser's 'Faery Queen,' and Sidney's faithful wife; Elizabeth Throckmorton was later to send Raleigh to the Tower. But there were the sisters, Douglas and Frances Howard, both rivals of their Queen, alike madly enamoured of Lord Robert; as two other sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, twain in all else, were said to have been one in this—their impulsive admiration for their kinsman,

the handsome, accomplished, hardly treated and depraved Earl of Devonshire. Of the first pair, Douglas, my Lady Sheffield, if all that was told was true, was her secret swain's match, in that 'all the perfumes of Araby could not sweeten that little hand' from the black stain of the blood of an honest and confiding man. Setting aside sweet Isabella Markham, the second wife of Sir John Harrington, whom he sang so melodiously, glance at two women remarkable above any for their wide and prolonged empire over the hearts of men. In one of her many sloughs appeared Bess of Hardwick, 'building Bess,' who, when the frost one severe winter stopped her architecture, died of sheer vexation and inanition, linked for ever with the piles of Hardwick, Chatsworth, and Oldcotes—closely connected with the invariably disastrous fortunes of the heirs to the crown in the persons of Mary Queen of Scots, and Henry Darnley's niece, Arabella Stewart—known by the respective denominations of Mistress Barlow, Lady Cavendish, Mistress St. Loe, and Lady Shrewsbury—and at fifty and upwards the imperious queen-regnant of her husband's affections; a woman of harsh features, of few scruples, of scant courtesy, but of wondrous energy and determination.

The other, less boldly ambitious and openly acquisitive—far less honest—accused of darker deeds, who by one fell blow lost husband and son, was Elizabeth's cousin, Lettice Knollys—in succession Lady Essex, Lady Leicester, and the wife of Sir Christo-

pher Blount, who neglected, bullied, and plundered her, but before whose earlier star that of Lord Robert, basking in the glorious rays of the western sun, paled at last.

Accomplished, adventurous, daring men-at-arms, beautiful and witty women, sometimes erring and evil, good lack! sometimes pure and staunch as she who lived among men, and could buckle men's armour on her breast, and yet loved to be termed the Virgin Queen! Draperies of cut velvet and stiff embroidery, pinked and slashed satin, like the doublet with which Sir Philip Calthorpe, the gay, insolent peacock, mocked the silly jay of a tradesman; fine beavers, seed-pearls, topaz and emerald carcanets, which might have formed a portion of the goodly wares of Sir Percy Shafton; gauds and glitters recalling Prince Arthur's bow-butts at Finsbury, and its nine hundred and forty-two gold chains, and the two thousand orange-tawny feathers, which Essex brought into the tilt-yard to spite scoffing Sir Walter Raleigh! In verity, we close our eyes, dazzled with the old show.

In the meantime, the players dragged on with their little show, their barbarous murders, and their strong speechifying; and perhaps the most suggestive thing about them was their apparel, furnished from the royal wardrobes of deceased sovereigns, so that in the truculent Briton who summarily despatched his neighbours to the shambles, Elizabeth could not help recognising the broken collar and loosely-

hanging doublet of her own ruthless father, bulky Henry; and in the prim, beardless youth, who in woman's weeds submitted to his caresses, she might wince (if Elizabeth's nerves could quiver for fear) at the wimple and the hood, the purfled, tarnished gold tissue of her sister, grim Mary.

The spectators were not so free and unceremonious as they showed themselves at the Globe Theatre, where the young gallants filled the never-failing balcony when it was not needed for stage purposes, or reclined at ease on the stage itself, and smoked the new Virginian tobacco; but there was no want of heartiness and enjoyment in the audience with all its stateliness, and Elizabeth with her own hand nearly boxed the ears of rough, honest Hunsdon, for an unsavoury comparison that smacked more of simple, jovial impulse, than artificial refinement.

As the drama drew to a close, Elizabeth remarked with approval the postures and elocution of a young man filling a subordinate post, and making it prominent by his innate sympathy and earnestness. She had dubbed Preston her scholar with solid advantages accruing to the distinction; and she had a gold chessman at hand to bestow as the prize on this day's efforts—thus her notice was interested and critical.

'That youth plays well,' she repeated decidedly, using a pouncet-box with which Lord Robert had been toying; 'he hath well nigh earned my guerdon.'

'The learned bumpkin is vastly honoured by such notice,' sneered the haughty and crafty courtier.

'Doth thy Grace not note how his hair hath never seen the gracious unguents and floating powders with which we strive to make ourselves personable under thy countenance.'

'I do not see what an ancient Briton hath to do with powder, or pomatum, or starch for his ruff, or for that matter with a ruff at all,' answered Elizabeth, shrewdly; 'and I can on my conscience commend this lad's natural locks as not being dependent on a master barber,' she added perversely, but not offended, rather flattered by her attendant's intolerance. 'Prithee, what called you him, Dr. Stokes?' she concluded, holding to her purpose, and addressing one of the deans who stood in his sombre black at her elbow, rather scouted, it must be confessed, by the gay damsels and knights.

'Master William Lee, please your highness, a worthy scholar in this University, and like to be a credit to his patrons,' answered the doctor, formally and deliberately.

'Said I not so!' exclaimed the Queen, gratified at this confirmation of her discernment.

'And said I not that he was some scholarly beggar?' murmured Lord Robert.

'Is he of kin to our good friend and champion, Lee of Ditchley?' inquired Elizabeth.

'But distantly, your Grace, and destitute of patrimony, clean destitute by—by confiscation in the late reign,' stammered the professor.

'Gramercy!' observed Elizabeth, frankly, 'many

a good subject of mine hath paid forfeit to my predecessors—the more reason that I should recompense him.'

'Sir Henry's poor kinsman who hath grown sour on the burnt porridge, the lean side of the venison, and the muddy draught of the ale; and hath therefore quitted the Hall, and taken to creeping and dreaming through college galleries and cells, fie on him! could he not find a sword, and fight like a man to amend his birthright?'

'Nay now, sirrah, we will not have all cut-throats and dare-devils,' tapping him somewhat sharply with her fan; 'we must have our doctors and divines, our choice students, like Master Roger, bred in this very University, to teach us our letters, and remind us how the ancients strode, and swore, and bragged, and plotted—like my Lord Strange or Robin himself here, who, if rumour lies not, hath, in spite of his words, condescended to study other arts than those which pertain to riding the ring, and taking say of a buck—in the presence-chamber and the camp.'

At the laughing and partial accusation Lord Robert's ruddy cheek—for it was a peculiarity of his otherwise swarthy beauty that the cheek grazed by his ear-jewel was warm in its brown as 'red poppies grown with corn'—deepened in its scarlet. Very soon—dogging his prosperity were whispers abroad, true or false, scorned by his mistress, of the nature of the secrets by which a foe of Lord Robert never lingered to cumber his progress.

The Queen continued, warmly, 'Good faith, ladies and gentlemen, our free, pure, and godly Protestant faith were never established, guarded, and preserved to latest generations without such learned and grave gentlemen; so when the play is played out let room be made for Master Lee.'

The last act was over, and in place of a descending curtain, or the Queen's anthem, the impromptu players, in their stage suits, came forward, and kneeling down reverently enough, offered up an audible prayer for the Queen's Majesty, to which the most reckless of the courtiers, and the Queen with her own lips, uttered a sonorous Amen — then marshalled by some of the chiefs of the University, anxious to get in their own word, amid considerable excitement the lucky youth was brought before the sovereign.

Master William Lee was a young man of three or four and twenty years of age, handsome, although without a tinge of the florid, dainty beauty of many of Elizabeth's body-guard. He was pale, and of a hard, cold aspect, as if his young blood had frozen in the chill, secluded class-rooms and cabinets of learning, and among the grey tomes and crackling parchments of centuries; only at times an inner fire unconsciously flashed up in its passive prison-house, and there was no want of physical development in the well-knit but stiffened frame of the scholar.

'Marry!' whispered light Frances Howard, 'it is a clerk from a tombstone.'

Elizabeth brusquely silenced the mumbling professors, and addressed their candidate with the lofty kindness and courtesy which none knew better how to employ.

'Young sir, we have admired your zeal in setting forth the excellent conceit of your masters, and as we feel that you have mainly contributed to their success and our diversion, we are minded to bestow on you a token of our gratitude and regard—recognising with some little regret that you purpose to follow an honourable aim, in which, however, it will better beseem our bishops, chancellors, and the dignitaries of our courts, civil and ecclesiastical, to encourage and reward you, than a simple woman and Queen.'

Master Lee's carriage was quiet and self-restrained, as if he were in a measure abstracted from and raised above the honour conferred upon him, and there was nothing awkward or churlish in his air while he answered promptly, with a rush of fresh emotion, 'Lady, I will lay my honours at thy feet.'

'God wot, we would not deprive thee of them, fair sir, sure that they will be well earned,' answered Elizabeth, with sweetness, well-pleased with the ready, firm compliment; 'yet belike it were pity that so comely a youth, and so loyal, should sink into an ashen-faced bookworm when there are spurs to be worn, and more clamorous renown to be won. If you care to don Elizabeth's colours, Master Lee, and assume the stars in Ariadne for the device on your shield, like the head of your house, and quit

dun Cambridge, its dim night-watches and monotonous pages, sacrilege though it be to say it here, Elizabeth will not forget her squire, nor what he has forsaken at her word.'

Lee looked fixedly at his Queen as she tempted him—so fixedly, that he seemed to see through and beyond her words and the images conjured up, and the light on his cheek and in his eye faded instead of flashing into fire.

'By your Grace's leave, I say you nay. I humbly thank you; but I know no other nurse than Alma Mater, no arena save what her search after truth supplies. I should but disappoint your goodness. I crave your pardon, madam, but if I am to vindicate your gracious notice, I must remain a scholar in the schools of Cambridge.'

'The University hath a claim upon him,' put in a morose Provost.

'And I would balk no man's inclinations,' amended Elizabeth, proudly, vexed, as her high, sensitive spirit was prone to be piqued, by the slightest resistance to her influence. 'Be a scholar or parson, or hedger and ditcher, if thou wilt; but, at least, receive my piece—a bauble which I had designed for the best performer, without conceiving that he would be so reasonable a man. A wise head on young shoulders, sir secretary?'

'Moderation is not so common that your Grace need deride it,' replied the privileged servant, soberly.

'Now read me no lecture, Cecil, within academic shades, but leave that to the genius of the place,' protested Elizabeth, impatiently, proceeding hastily and indifferently with the ceremony of conferring the royal gift on the unabashed student who knelt down at a signal—and indeed the passage was quite a common one, and these costly trifles, ivory lutes, ruby signets, gold arrows, were bestowed as bountifully as her silver pennies.

With the sovereign's abated condescension, the intense curiosity of the bystanders slackened, and in the reaction—

> Lords whispered to ladies, as well you may think,
> And ladies replied with nod, titter, and wink.

Gradually the concentrated attention of the party ebbed from the young orator, so fickle and fleeting is fame, and he would have been suffered to withdraw with his toy without more notice, had it not been for no less a person than Lord Robert, who, appeased by the novice's insensibility, or aroused by the singular spectacle of his disinterested pursuit of knowledge, advanced towards him graciously.

'Sir scholar, we have many examples of valour at our Divinity's court, but few of such sheer simplicity—by simplicity, be it known, I mean crystal clearness of soul in thy devoir. Accept, I pray thee, also, this remembrance from Robert Dudley, who hath known something of the high emprise and charmed toil of science, but who hath a more heavenly mistress still.' And with great nobleness

and courtesy he unfastened from a chain round his neck a chased medallion, and presented it to Lee, while his bright roving eye rested for a moment wistfully, and perchance longingly, on him who had the lineaments of an anchorite.

At that moment the Queen rose from her chair of state—her train was marshalled—the doctors bowed and backed out before her—the whole grand throng swept from the Hall of Trinity, and William Lee saw them no more for many a day.

CHAPTER II.

THE CLERK OF CAMBRIDGE.

IN one of the deserted libraries of Cambridge—deserted in those gala days of the Queen's presence—sat Master Lee, not choked by the dust, if depressed by the silence, bending over a folio, yet not now engrossed with the short-sighted wisdom of ages. 'So that was a courtly pageant,' he muttered to himself; 'yonder fair dame, she is liker a dame than a damsel—though I doubt if my Lord Robert would prove an altogether uxorious husband—is the Princess of Woodstock, fierce Henry's daughter; and men spend their lives sunning themselves in her smile—it is a gladdening one, makes the heart leap somehow; but you said wrong, my lord, she is not—no woman born of woman is more heavenly than science, divinest philosophy, history, poetry. Have with the sages of Greece and Rome, the Stoics and the Peripatetics, Cicero and Seneca; and not they alone, but England's worthies, Chaucer, Gower,

Master Leland, the French Froissart, whom my Lord Berners has translated, the Italian Tasso, and a thousand others. Let queens' favours and women's smiles, gold and embroidery, perish for me.' Thus dogmatized the recluse; and as he roused himself from his dream, and set himself to study, the straight lines of his face sharpened in their severity, the colourless cheek looked altogether wan.

To the clerk of Cambridge Elizabeth was but a wiser Dido, a more innocent Irene, against the seers of old—their words were the realities, her fleeting gentleness and fickle attention the shadows across his path. Was he wise, this student? Nay, he was young, enamoured, and mystified as ever was fantastic gallant; and his treasures were musty tomes, strange cyphers, uncouth black-letter; he lived in the past, and this Elizabeth, this mere woman and mighty queen invited him to the present, the period of action and experience, and their ripe fruits which formed her heroes; and he declined the quest, and chose to dwell a monk in Protestant England—not but there were worse persons than these abused monks.

Master Lee's end had its glory. 'Let me find accordance in these systems, imbibe the melody of that song, prove why this memory of mine has to do with all my likes and dislikes, comprehend yon 'blazing star' which will soon vanish from the horizon. Cambridge, I owe you much; let another scholar repay your bounty, as Camden will do to Oxford, and I am content.'

And still as the lad read and thought—the torpor of a prison crept over his limbs, thick dews of sheer fatigue, thrown off by the body resisting the long strain of the intellect, gathered unheeded on his brow, and a subtle, deceptive mist stole over his reason; and still as he pondered the heart within him grew the harder and the colder in its own cares, the temper more stern and imperious, the pride of intellect more thoroughly pervading and all-subduing.

An old officer tottered in to close the doors and turn the ponderous bolts and bars, and started wildly, as if he had seen a ghost, when he spied the solitary occupant of the room in the gathering twilight risen to his feet to read the precious volume not more chained to its shelf than he was to these cloisters; and finding that his interruption was unmarked, the intruder came with his echoing footsteps close to the side of the clerk, and putting out a bony hand from his buckram gown, with his nutcracker jaws and his skull-cap that was not so far removed from a cowl, he uttered a warning,

'Leave the books, Master Lee; follow the others to the merry-makings; try a bout with the rapier or the quarter-staff, court a bonny lass, or even rattle the dice, and drink an extra cup of clary. It is not natural, I say, for a young fellow to be so woundy quiet and given over to learning. I took a turn about the great world under my Lord Cardinal, when young Percy, Earl Northumberland's heir, he that should have wed Queen Anne, and better luck to

them, thought no shame to be his servitor. I set eyes in my day on one, with whom our trading gallants would give their gay mantles to have had a word—even Sebastian Cabot, navigator, Bristol, a black-visaged man like my Lord Robert that there's word of as mate to the Queen's grace, God bless her—only his hair was lank, not in love locks, and his brow was knotted into a gloom above his thick eyebrows, natheless he was an affable man to approach; but in my whole life I never yet knew good come of what was contrary to nature. There was Master Latimer t'other day, scarce a scholard 'mong the best, yet you wot he had torchlight enough before he ended. I told him many's the time when he came over here, long ere he drew up with Master Bilney, that he would live to smoke his eyn out meddling with homilies and treatises, though he dare bring no link here; nay, there has not been faggot or candle underneath this roof since the days of its founder. And there is Master Richard Yorke, with his saws and maggots, stubbornly holding to the extreme of nonconformity, and I wis he has cold enough comfort, out in his house of Barne-elms. Beware of books, Master Lee.'

'Dost think me a coward?' asked Lee, scornfully.

'No coward, but, saving your presence, mayhap a fool in this matter,' persisted the grisly, grinning Mentor; 'much learning is allied to folly, as was writ by the great King Solomon whom the Queen of Sheba, like unto our Elizabeth, who has so cunningly

appraised the renowned colleges, visited in his glory. Take an old man's word, 'ware the books, Master Lee. One man's vice lies in black-pudding and strong ale, and another's in black letters and long figures, and the second is worse than the first. Mind Master Hugh, spite of his jests, and 'ware the books and scholars' visions, my young sir,' urged the greyhead, doggedly, and with a halting irony.

'A maundering dotard,' said Lee, angrily; and as he wandered through the summer streets, and out into the fields—his broad back slouched, his well-set head drooped—his reverie was still not of the king-cups, or marsh-mallows, or the wild duck's nest in the reeds, or the tiny barges on the Grant, or the summer-houses on its banks, or the rifted purple clouds where the peaceful blue showed between, but still of problems and theories, dead men's reckonings, the possession of universal accomplishments, and the achievement of European fame—like More, like Erasmus who sojourned in this very place, like Languet.

As Lee returned to his rooms near the college, through the Jewry and by Rose tavern, he was arrested by a humble application from a squalid woman, in a buffin gown and coarse curch. 'Worshipful master,' she gasped, grasping his cloak, 'I am a poor widow; my son was sawing wood for the festival, lost his balance and fell into the pit, and was so sorely injured, that the chirurgeon sayeth if the breath of life be kept in him, it is all we can

expect; he will not work a hand's turn for months, not till the hard winter be upon us. Had the accident happened a day later, it would have passed under the Queen's notice. As it is, I have but my share in the gold nobles which she leaves for all the poor in Cambridge. Charity, in the name of your lady mother, my master.'

'Go to the proper authorities, dame,' said the student, listlessly. 'Here, I have but a groat to spare thee, for,' he continued to himself, 'this French ducat is to pay the entrance fee to Dr. Baker, these Spanish doubloons go to the old cormorant at the bookstall for that rare copy of Bede, and this last effusion of Master Ferrers, (I think not much of him, but one must read up to the wits of the day); and the rials will scarce satisfy Goody Poyntz for roots, and bread, and necks of mutton—wholesome fare, an' it be not too much coaxing of the flesh, of which the commons have enough and to spare—until Martinmas:' (for Master Lee was 'his own founder and benefactor,' though he did not suffer from the extortions of the townsmen of Cambridge, who, at an earlier period, thought fit so to raise and rack the rent of their houses, that the King was forced to interfere, and appoint taxers to limit their usury.) Thus communing, Master Lee disappeared under an archway, and the beggar stopped the brief blessing for the scanty, unfeeling alms, seeing how little it was heeded.

'I may save myself the trouble of being bedesman

to the threadbare niggard. Ay, ay; full brains, empty pockets, and cold hearts, quotha!' she substituted, bitterly.

The student's room was a comfortless and bare spectacle of absolute necessaries, veiled by a litter of books and papers; the deal table and chairs, the uncushioned stone-seat in the window, the uncurtained bed in the corner opposite the chest with his suits of clothes: his meal was frugal as a hermit's pulse and water; the broiled cabbage and mash of beans, flanked by nothing more substantial than a hunch of bread and slice of cheese, and a bicker of the sour ale, of which Erasmus complained, and into which he poured his modicum of wine for his injured stomach's sake (yet at an ordinary season of the year victuals were not above the rate of sixpence for a lamb, and three-halfpence for a fat cock), and the service was rendered by a purblind, stone-deaf hostess of a beadle's widow.

As Master Lee ate, he meditated on his wonted themes; ere he slept, indeed, in place of a penitential psalm or an Ave Maria, he read in Tyndale's Bible, and prayed to the Father Almighty and the Saviour of the world; but his cry was for health and strength and indefatigable ardour, rather than for remission of sins and a holy comforter. If an angel had descended from heaven to stand by him that night, it is possible that he would have breathlessly questioned the messenger, as the unfallen Adam addressed Raphael in Milton's 'Paradise,' on the

economy of heaven and the rebellion and defeat of the rebel angels, in place of protesting his weakness with Moses and Isaiah, or crying out that he would die with Manoah, or confessing that his family was poor in Manasseh and he the least in his father's house with Gideon, or falling at his feet as dead with the beloved disciple.

As Lee lay on his bed, and turned uneasily in his slumbers — for his stout body was unnerved, and his brain was hot — there did come before him the miserable figure of the widow woman begging aid for her man-grown son, and his heart smote him with a dull reproach, and his mind busied itself with a vain curiosity — Was the youth come to such estate as he had attained? what had been his hopes and views, and were they utterly dashed by a moment's calamity? Was he his mother's only child, and had she travailed in spirit and laboured in body to bring him to this failure? His own poor, tenderly-bred mother had worn herself to the grave by such unsuitable struggles, long ere he knew them and could requite them, or even comprehend from whose life-blood came the pittance hoarded to carry the boy to the gentle training of his Alma Mater.

He might have spared this woman's son a more liberal gift. Tush! it would not matter when he wore the laurel crown, and enlightened the nations in his turn, whether he had tarried to relieve this wretched human want, and stinted himself to bestow

its temporary solace. He should confer on his kin greater benefits than this.

Says caustic Dekker, in enumerating the inhabitants of the Elysian fields—'Some schollers are admitted into this societie, but the number of them is not halfe so many as are in one of the colledges of an universitie; and the reason is, they eyther kindle firebrands (in sanctified places) by their contentions, or kill the hearts of others by their coldnes.'

Oh! man, man, man, wilt never perform what thy hand findeth to do? Will thy very duties and fruits of grace be in the future, thy peace of mind as well as thy high hopes, all depending on the turning of a straw in the mysteries of Providence?

The broad, open face of the morning sun at last awoke Master Lee from his late and heavy sleep to start drowsily from his pillow, to feel straitened by the dim consciousness of a great undertaking, and the next moment to brace himself eagerly with a still white heat of intentness for the day's acquirements and its burden of knowledge to be added to the load already borne by the groaning capacity.

Hollow chest and heavy forehead,

Master Lee was fighting for that event, hurrying to rob himself of one-half of his birthright, murdering with all his might what men would have then styled a comely and serviceable carcass—and none to interfere, for, to be sure, he but did what he would with his own.

CHAPTER III.

CICELY AND NAN.

SOME miles from Cambridge, still on the Grant or Cam, but where it was comparatively a rustic and wilding river, close to the fens already partly drained by the Dutchmen's assistance, but sorely plagued by 'the Bailiff of Bedford,' as country folks termed the river Ouse, lay Barne-elms, once a manor of fair extent though in a poor country, and containing an ancient dwelling-house sheltered by ancient wood from the cold blast off the marshes and the water. But the times which were so fine for the many, had not amended the condition of Barne-elms; the manor was curtailed to a few acres; the old house, already only fit for a reeve or yeoman, though still tenanted by the original family, was fast falling to decay—becoming a harbour for the mole and the bat; and the wood had been cut down to supply necessary wants, leaving the low weather-beaten house itself mostly built of timber, exposed to the winds—and with so few retainers to supply the requisite labour,

that the land, stripped of the covering which had brought it the ambitious name of the Chase, when the wood had encroached on the fens and not the fens on the wood, had not been used for any other crop, but stretched out in long tedded grass with mossy tree-roots and pollards protruding here and there—a very desolation.

Within a small paddock surrounding the house, a mare of some claims to breeding and bearing, a rough little country pony, a few sedate cows and their calves, fed; while a not very large company of sheep with their faithful attendant colley, roamed the wild chase. A huge, gaunt mastiff sat resignedly on its chain, and submitted with dignity to the forward, silly advance of a flock of hens and chickens, young partridges, domesticated and erratic ducks constantly levanting to the tempting pools of the fens.

The mansion, a hunting-seat in the reign of one of the Edwards, was now little better than a grange; it was long and low, built in the quadrangular form so general—but in place of the central clock-tower was an old heavy stone porch, seated round for the convenience of the pilgrim or pensioner who waited for a dole, or the almoner who dispensed the broken meat, once carried daily in a basket from the groaning hall table; and the flanking angles of the building constructed carefully with loopholes and embrasures for defence, were quite ruinous and overgrown with tree ivy, while the moat was a stone-dry channel, except on one side where it would have

formed a stagnant ditch, had it not been for the natural springs and aquatic plants which sweetened its waters. There was a musk rose, then common in England, protected from adventurous herbivorous teeth by a rough fence, drooping at one lattice window, with a honeysuckle nodding in at the other, and embowering that side of the porch. At the opposite gable from that which retained the remains of the moat was the pleasance or garden, with some pretension lingering in its pleached walks, and knotted, curious figures—but mostly given up to the cultivation of fruit-trees, pot-herbs, and flowers of a hardy and homely description.

The accommodation within the mossy walls was exceedingly limited, even at a date when space was little craved, and the wealthy merchants' wives of 'golden Chepe' were content with flats, in which their descendants could not breathe for the few hours of a city show. The square door was of oak, crossed and barred with iron, and opened into a single rude, dusky, heavy-roofed hall—roomy enough that, at least, if it had not constituted kitchen, banqueting-hall, withdrawing-room, and all. It was cut off at each end by open staircases, running up to a gallery forming a half square, pierced with small windows, and opening into the sleeping apartments of the family. The timbers of the huge beams were in several places left bare, and carved at the ends. The two chimney-pieces fronted each other, and rose in 'masses of columns, arches, niches, and caryatides,'

like the solemn and lofty peaks and pinnacles, and the long recesses of a Gothic pulpit, piled up to the ceiling—and the light and shade, the sunrise and sunset, the fire glow and the moonbeam made strange plays, grotesque extravagances, and full contrasts, among these glowing alps with their gloomy caverns.

Here abode Master Richard Yorke, come of gentle blood and respectable lineage, and himself a man of parts, travelled, of quaint and refined taste; and here grew to women's stature his two fair young motherless daughters, Cicely and Nan; and here served them loyally old Gil Flowerdew and his wife Grizel, who had been born on Barne-elms, ere fines and confiscations had clipped it small, and shorn it close, and rendered its housekeeping a very simple though still a hearty affair; the one had been body-servant to Master Yorke in France and Italy, Flanders and Almaigne, the other had been waiting-woman to Madam Yorke when her husband first brought her home to her seat by an old-fashioned, but honourable and warm hearth. Now the moneys which had been laid up for the renovation of the manor-house had long since been swallowed down in the troubles of that generation, and Madam Yorke rested in the family vault under the parish church, and the family existed on the remnant of its possessions and the tradition of its dignity.

There were traces enough of the bearing and habits of its occupants, present and past, in the insensate old hall. The rough walls were hung with stags'

horns and foxes' brushes, and morions and cuirasses, dags and swords—the spoil of scores of hunts, factions, and frays; and in one deep window stood the living owner's gear, the inlaid table upon its foot-cloth, the carved chair with the cloak flung over the leathern back, the drawers fitted into the recess, the portable cupboard filled—not with plate or charters, or powder and shot, or flies and birds' feathers, and dogs' collars and calls, and physic-balls and drenches, and recipes of draughts, lotions, and baths at need—but books and manuscripts, verses in eggs, lozenges, roundells, and triquets, cases of coins, relics of foreign parts in bronzes, marbles, and mosaics, bits of a unicorn's horn (a prime antidote against poison), a fragment of beryl used as a divining crystal, instruments for calculating horoscopes, cabalistic signs jumbled together with algebraic tables, preserved skeletons of animals and structures of plants, and models in wood and clay, for Master Lee dabbled in every practice of his time, from astrology to mechanics. In the other window, near one of the cavernous fire-places—both containing blazing, or smouldering fuel even in summer—as the rafters yawned and cracked, and the neighbouring air breathed moist and cool, and though wood was scarce, sedge and turf abounded, settles were fixed for Goody Flowerdew's trenchers, and burnished copper kettles and pans above her baking-table, and in loving propinquity to such of her husband's fish-nets, sowing-sheets, bird-snares,

hoes and hatchets, as he did not choose to trust to the outhouses—or what had once formed the plough court, the dove court, and the buttery court. Across the balustrade of the gallery hung the girls' embroidery pieces, their last woven linen, their wool, yarn, and silk, their bunches of herbs in common use—and suspended at one side by a silken ribbon a gilded cithern, and at the other a cage with one of those pairs of cooing, crooning, caressing Barbary doves, for which poor Mary of Scotland wrote to her uncle Lorraine, that they might share her captivity.

Besides these goods there were peculiar nets, such as were not then familiarly known in this country, hanging half completed over a stool, and a piece of wooden carving, which might have occupied a German artist, clearly copied from the case of the Brunswick clock. The last were Gil Flowerdew's importations. Gil was a taciturn man and slow, in the home-spun that had replaced his blue coat, but he had a retentive memory and some ingenuity, and he was constantly astonishing the household, and transporting the soul of his loquacious Goody by a fresh revival of the arts and magic that he had seen long ago beyond seas. Gil should have been in the other world to do full justice to his capabilities; as it was, he was a repertory of wonders, and scarcely a working day passed without Goody's crying exultingly, 'Marry come up, my young mistresses, and see what Gil has been after to-day; he has spitted the larks in a new fashion; he has clean changed

the muscadine just by his way of holding the bottle; he has watered the parsley and cresses with my suds, bless him.' Perhaps Gil employed these simple means to impress the women-folk duly with his superiority, and the honour to which he was entitled; for as Gil's serving coat was superseded, and his wages, in the depressed state of the house's treasury, limited by his own will to the accredited crown and pair of shoon, and as his tongue did not wag in his own behalf, and as women are proverbially led by the eye or the ear, his Goody might have escaped from lawful authority and usurped his prerogatives, had he not daunted her by his wonderful, silent knowledge, which, had it not been exercised in a Puritan household, and within the cognizance of Master Dyer their preacher, she would have feared had an unchancy flavour of Satan. To think of Goody's Gil in league with the devil. Why any day when she forgot her catechism he might carry her with him up either chimney on a broomstick, or bring weird flames and knockings, such as her master had word of, into every hole and corner of Barne-elms; but Gil heard sermon at his proper peril in the meeting-house, instead of in any of the half-reformed churches and chapels of Cambridge, and so she might rest satisfied that her skilful spouse was honest, and she perfectly safe in his company.

This Goody was a confident, rapid little woman, very tender-hearted, and cutting a somewhat

comical figure in her liveliness of expression and her attire, which coincided exactly with the description of the rhymer—

Her blanket hose,
Her shoon smeared with tallow.
* * * *
A furred flocket,
A grey russet rocket.
A duke of Lincoln green,
It had been hers I ween
More than forty year,
And so it doth appear.
And the green bare threads
Look like sea-weeds,
Withered like hay,
The wool worn away.

Master Yorke was more a man of delicate instincts than of original power, of fine intelligence than of vigorous attainments. He was too honest and too wilful to have been frightened from his Calvinistic principles by all the hangings and burnings, the prohibitions and restrictions of the Tudors, but he had submitted without much effort to ward off ruin. True, the followers of the Consistory had not experienced their most bitter blight, and resistance had been useless, even had Master Yorke been a man in harness, where he was eminently a man of peace; but though he had not failed to prove a brave man, there was a supineness about him partly constitutional, partly the effect of his course of life.

Yet who that knew the bookish squire with his dials and elixirs, his medals and specimens, his Latin

and Italians, his old English volumes, his chronicles, his poetical tracts, his books of alchemies, and his delight in their contents—who that beheld him mooning resignedly amid the wrecks which persecution had left him, would have wished him unlettered, bluff and restive, and far less happy than before. Had Master Yorke lived but a dozen years later, he would have been the man to revel in the supernatural court and charmed adventures of fairyland; had he survived a century or so and seen the Great Plague, he might have shut himself up like another quiet author, in his crumbling Barne-elms, and written an earlier edition of the Bannatyne manuscripts.

Master Yorke was a reverend-looking old man, white-haired before his time, with a rare fineness of features and symmetry of limb. His gown was lined with martin, and the band of his bonnet was fixed with a mystic, wavering bloodstone—a cure for wounds and effusions of blood. He only stirred periodically from his window or his chimney corner to note the weather, to feed his mastiff—a duty which he performed with his own hand, or to mount and ride for a few miles to visit an ancient neighbour, or borrow a book from an affable professor, to lean on his staff like Jacob, and follow his merry daughters as they would have him stroll in the garden, watch the stars of nights, or go in state followed by Gil bearing his Bible with its profuse marginal writing to worship God under penalty according to his conscience, not among the Calvinized curates of Cam-

bridge, but in company with the yeomen and the hinds of the meeting-house.

Master Yorke left the active management of his property to Gil Flowerdew, and to the few labourers whose huts remained on Barne-elms. With all his learning he knew little of the squire's calendar, of washes for his sheep, cures for his cattle, set times and seasons for making hay.

In defiance of his attendance at the meeting, Master Yorke was sometimes called in reprehension and reproach by the sour-faced of his sect 'Parcel Puritan,' 'Statute Protestant,' 'Injunction man,' because he was mild and tolerant, and even favourable to many uses and abuses which the stricter Nonconformists condemned—only none dared term the impoverished squire of Barne-elms, who had fled for his life, and dwelt with Whittingham at Frankfort, under Mary, a recreant. Master Yorke patronized wit, literature, the gentle science of music, along with alchemy, so singularly attractive to the Puritans, in place of reckoning them cardinal sins. He would not have his daughters censured, curtailed and crossed in their dress, speech, and country plays, not even by Master Dyer. Not that Master Dyer, a good, pure-minded man, with many children to feed and clothe, and little wherewith, though eked out by various trades, to do it, would have been of himself a tyrant, but now and then some mischievous or malicious member of the congregation—not many, for Puritanism was not then hostile to aristocracy, and

most people, old and young, bold and soft, entertained a tenderness towards brave Mistresses Cicely and Nan, the lady-peas and lady-birds of Barne-elms—worried the hard-toiled minister to interfere with the privileges of his young parishioners, and to interpret the plaiting of hair, and the broidery, and the gold and silver, against which the apostle warned the Grecian women, as the ruffs, partlets, and kirtles, the fans and fringed gloves of the damsels of Barne-elms—forgetting at the same time that Paul only recommended a better sort of ornament.

And not that the daughters of Barne-elms were very richly clad. Necessity impressed upon them the acts of Henry and Elizabeth—the monopoly of cloth of gold and bodkin, sable fur and velvet, by persons of distinction with an income of not less than two hundred and fifty pounds per annum, and the reservation of satin, damask, and fur of conies, to individuals competent to spend one hundred a-year on wardrobe and housekeeping. Cicely and Nan Yorke figured mostly in cloth gowns and hoods, but then they had the fertile invention and pretty taste of their age and sex; and, secluded as their lives had been, they were not so demure as to avoid ruffles and laces, passmenting and overlaying, with tires of their mother's seed-pearls on their hair, and about their round throats, and tasseling the long waists of their bodices. Nan affected the finest clothes, and was queen of the little court, although Cicely was the elder. Nan

was the more boisterous and buxom, and what people regarded as the prouder and more ambitious, and the world called her Brown Nan, although, also, Cicely was literally the browner of the two. This preference was not because Cicely's was the weaker character, or the less fair face, but society then, as now, taking it in a mass, and begging its pardon, was more remarkable for the readiness and unanimity of its decisions, than for the niceness of its discrimination. Society among the knights and dames, the varlets and queans of Elizabeth's Cambridge, seized upon what was striking and within their easy comprehension, rather than upon what was more precious and original. Certainly Nan Yorke was farther advanced than Cicely, older at sixteen than Cicely at eighteen years of age, but simply because there was less depth in Nan to attain a sweet mellowness and sound ripeness. In the same way Nan was apt to put herself first and take the lead on ordinary occasions, and it was only a few who guessed that at special seasons Cicely became instinctively the ruling power and guiding star of the maiden world.

Cicely was not quiet or fearful, she was only as yet a smiling, more sober echo of wild Nan, and sometimes she showed her spirit by changing characters with her sister, and proving, for an hour or a day, the more joyous and gipsy-like of the two; and there was this significant trait in Cicely's mirth, that it was then more unique than Nan's,

wittier, more grotesque and humorous,—that choice humour which is found akin to pathos.

Both daughters were fairly endowed in body and soul, they were well and delicately shaped, with comely and blooming faces. Nan was the ruddier, but Cicely's skin had the velvet softness of poor, foolish Anne Boleyn's; they had the eyes which are often mistaken for black, the deep nut-brown, rather Spanish brown, of English berry-brown beauty, melting in Cicely, dancing in Nan. The Yorke's as a race were mostly brown-skinned, and they had family features. A squareness of the upper portion of the face, a free width and openness between the eyes, a high, fine nose, and a curved and classic chin—a cast of countenance stately in comely youth, and noble in haggard age. In the present generation the mouth was the signal point of identity. In Master Yorke it had been thin and was hidden by the beard, in Nan it was arch and pouting, in Cicely straight and full, rather grave and almost heavy in repose, but opening with the effect of a sunbeam displaying the light bend of the jaw, the regular white teeth, and what a frank and gladsome thing a smile may be. The girls resembled each other almost as closely as we see two roses on one stem, but while marrows perfectly distinct and apart, the one of a deeper crimson, the other of a daintier mould, or a richer fragrance. Still Nan would freckle and tan in the rude air, and few of the cosmetics, the bitter almonds, the

talc oil, the essences and unguents of the city, reached Barne-elms; and Cicely would look sallow, and a little solemn when languid or weary.

These girls were complete rustics, as their cousin Dick Yorke, in the suite of the great Duke of Norfolk, could tell them, in comparison with the dazzling splendour of the Court ladies at that most gorgeous era; however, they had been sufficiently well educated for their rank, and above their fortune—they could read, write, and cast accounts, play the lute, and sing prick-song with indifferently trained sweet voices, work tapestry and embroidery, spin and stitch the family linen, make pies and puddings; rear chickens and calves, and, whisper it not in modern Gath, in a strait, or on a frolic, milk cows. Nan was the loudest and busiest, Cicely the steadiest; and Cicely could compass the new and intricate marvel of stocking-knitting. 'William Rider, apprentice to Thomas Burdet, at the foot of London Bridge, saw a pair of knit worsted hose at an Italian merchant's that had been brought from Mantua. He immediately borrowed them, made a similar pair, and presented them to the Earl of Pembroke. That was the first pair of knit worsted hose in England.' Since then, this piece of industry had come into great repute, and was a profitable source of livelihood to those who followed it for pay. The Queen's Grace had refused to wear plain silk or linen, or even paned hose of different materials, since she had received the knitted silk stockings from Spain; and

the quality, after her example, did not like to be content with less than these looped inventions of the Low Countries.

The Yorkes were not scholars like Elizabeth, or those Englishwomen with regard to whom Erasmus said—'The clergy cannot read Latin, the ladies can talk it,' yet we have seen how even the maiden Queen fared in a clerk's estimation; but they had read their Bibles and the homilies of their Protestant fathers, and they had even dabbled of a winter's evening in their father's books, not his antiquities, or his astrology, or his 'Tusser's Good Points,' the principal husbandry which the gentle squire studied, but in his tales and ballads, his 'Chaucer,' his 'Maid Emlyn,' his 'King and a Poor Northern Man,' wherein the plight of the sufferer is so impressively described:—

This poore man was in a great stond,
His senses they were almost wood;
I think, if he had not took grace in 's mind,
That he would never again been good.

His head was troubled in such a plight,
As though his eyes were apple grey;
And if good learning he had not tooke,
He wod a cast himself away;

or 'The Wittie Conceit of Jack of Dover,' being 'his privy search for the veriest foole in England,' abounding in such narratives as

'THE FOOLE OF SHREWSBURIE.'

'In Shrewsburie there was of late (quoth another of the jurie), a substantial innkeeper, that kept a certaine foole in his house, of whom he demanded

on a time, of what profession he thought most men of the towne to be of? who answered that he thought they were phisitions. 'Phisitions!' quoth the innkeeper; 'what wager wilt thou lay on that?' 'Marry,' answered the foole, 'I will lay five crownes, and that within few dayes I will approve it, or else I will pay the money.' 'Well,' said the innkeeper, 'thou shalt either pay it or be well payd for it, if it be not so: but if thou make it good, thou shalt have five crownes of mee.' 'Content,' quoth the foole: so upon the next morning he put a clout under his chin, and over his mouth, and laying his hand under his jawes, went hanging his head up and down the towne, as if he had bin very sicke: but at last, comming into a cutler's shop, a friend of his, he made a great showe of the paine of the toothach, asking of him a medicine for the same? who presently taught him one, with which he thankfully departed: and with this device he went almost to every house of the towne, to learne a medicine for the toothach, setting downe in a booke divers medicines, with their names that gave them: which being done, he returned to the innkeeper, with his clout about his mouth, seeming to be sore payned with the toothach, which the innkeeper perceiving, in pittie brake into this speech: 'Alas, poore foole, never feare it, if it be but the toothach, Ile helpe thee presently.' 'I pray you do,' (quoth the foole), 'for I am in cruell paine;' which he no sooner taught him, but the foole, pulling off his clout, fell into a

great laughing, with these words: 'This is the best medicine that ever I learned, for it hath not only made me whole, but hath gotten me five crownes.' 'As how?' said the innkeeper. 'Marry, thus,' quoth the fool: 'you layde a wager with mee that most of the towne were not phisitions, and I have prooved that they be, for most part in every house I have learned medicines for my teeth, and they that give medicines can be no other than phisitions, in witnes whereof, see heere in my booke what is set downe.' The innkeeper seeing himselfe thus overreacht, confessed the wager, and payde the foole his money. 'Well,' quoth Jacke of Dover, 'this, in my minde, was pretty foolery; but yet the foole of all fooles is not here found that I looke for,' or

'THE FOOLE OF BUCKINGHAM.'

'There was of late (quoth another of the jurie), a certaine young man dwelling in Buckingham, who had long time (in the way of mariage) made sute unto a very rich widdow in the same towne, and to that purpose had spent much money; but all in vaine; for he had purchased no more favour at her handes than he had when first he began his sute. Whereupon the young man (not meaning as yet to give over the same) went another way to worke, made it knowne to a cosen of his, being a merry gentleman of the same towne, who taking the matter in hand, went to this widdowe's house, and tolde her of his kinsman, an olde suter of hers, how he had now

provided himself otherwise of a wife, and meant not to trouble her any further, and that he intended the next Sunday following to be askt in the church, but that he doubted she would forbid the banes. 'Not I, by my troth,' quoth the widdow, 'nor any one for me.' Whereupon the old gentleman procured her to set her hand to a bond of two hundred pound, with this condition:—That neither she, nor any one for her, by any means, should then, or at any time after, forbid, or cause it to be forbidden: the which being done, away goes he, and wils his foresayd kinsman to haste to the church, and against the next Sunday following, bespeake the banes betwixt the widdow and himselfe. When Sunday came, the widdow gets her up betimes in the morrow, decking herselfe in her best apparell, and withall she hyes unto the church to heare who it was that her olde lover should marry. But when service was done (contrary to her expectation), she heard that her owne name was askt unto him, she was so abashed that she knew not what to do; yet durst not (for fear of forfeiting her bond) make any meanes to have the banes forbidden, but of force was content to let them alone; and so at the day appoynted, she was maried to the young man, who prooved a very carefull husband, and long lyved they togither in great love and unitie.' 'Well,' quoth Jack of Dover, 'this in my minde was pretty foolerie; but yet the Foole of all Fooles is not here found that I looke for.'

A book, which to read was as good as cracking a joke with Will Somers, the late King Henry's jester, high in his capricious, tyrannical favour.

For contemporary authors, they knew some of the sauciest and least befouled passages of that wild, whimsical fellow, who was afterwards Ben Jonson's antagonist—Thomas Dekker, so much worse off than his brethren, in that he spent from 1613 to 1616 in the King's Bench Prison, 'and how much longer I know not,' albeit the stout spirit of the old dramatist, in his world of 'passion and revelry, want and despair,' was not tamed. Already in Elizabeth's reign he had commenced the full list of plays and tracts, which ended in 'The Knight's Conjuring,' and 'The Gull's Hornbook,' and expressed the sly and pungent satire given out in his account of his imps:—

'The bloud of the grape coming up into their cheeks, it was hard to judge whether they blushed to see themselves in such a pickle, or lookt red with anger one at another; but the troth is, their faces would take any dye but a blush-colour, and they were not made of the right mettle to be angry; but their wits (like wheeles in Brunswick clocks), being all wound up so farre as they could stretch, were all going, but not one going truely.'

Or in the advice to the gallant in Paul's Walk:—

'Now for your venturing into the walk. Be circumspect and wary what pillar you come in at, and take heed in any case, as you love the reputation of your honour, that you avoid the serving-man's log,

and approach not within five fathome of that pillar; but bend your course directly in the middle line, that the whole body of the church may appeare to be yours; where, in view of all, you may publish your sute in what manner you affect most; either with the slide of your cloke from the one shoulder, and then you must, as it were in anger, suddenly snatch at the middle of the inside, if it be taffetas at the least, and so by that means your costly lining is betrayed, or else by the pretty advantage of complyment. But one note by the way do I especially woo you to, the neglect of which makes many of our gallants chepe and ordinary, that by no means you be seen above four turns; but in the fifth make yourself away, eyther in some of the semsters' shops, the new tobacco office, or amongst the booksellers, where, if you cannot read, exercise your smoke, and inquire who has writ against this divine weed.

* * * * *

'After dinner you may appear again, having translated yourself out of your English cloth cloke into a light Turkey grogram, if you have that happiness of shifting, and then be seene, for a turn or two, to correct your teeth with some quill or silver instrument, and to cleanse your gums with a wrought handkerchief; it skills not whether you dined or no, that is best known to your stomach; or in what place you dined, though it were with cheese, of your mother's making, in your chamber or studie.'

Dick Yorke, the Court cousin, had taught Nan Wyatt's songs, which preceded those of Harrington and Wotton; and both sisters had made, in the crabbed handwriting of the century, collections of the proverbs on an acquaintance with which Elizabeth piqued herself, and which we in our gentility have learnt to style low and vulgar.

There they stood, the very same homely, acute aphorisms which drop at this day from shrewd, sturdy, unpolished lips, rich in superhuman moderation and discretion, only the spelling differeth since they fell from the mouths of kings.

Yt ys not all gold that gloweth.

A byrde in ye hande ye better than three in ye woode.

Though pepper be bleck,
Ye hath a goode smeck.

He that will not be warned by hys owne fader
He shall be warned by hys stepfader.

Sith ye marry ye wynde
Yt will settle.

For their manners, each girl had carefully conned 'the Boke of Curtasye,' that comprehensive and considerate code of an early age, in which the student of primitive etiquette is taught all modest and gentle behaviour, from the grave injunction—

Rede or synge, or byd prayeris
To Crist for all thy Christen frerys;
Be curtayse to God, and knele doun
On bothe knees with grete devocioun;

and the charge—

Another curtayse y wylle the teche,
Thy fader and moder with mylde speche,
Thou worschip and serve with alle thy mygt,
That thou dwell the lengur in erthely lygt;

to the merely judicious advice—

Pare thy bred and kerue in two,
The over crust the nether fro;
In foure thou cut tho over dole,
Set them togedur as hit were whole;
Sithen cut the nether crust in three
And turne hit downe, lerne this at me,
And lay thy trencher thee before,
And sitt upryght for any sore;
Spare brede or wyne, drynke or ale,
To thy messe of kochyne be set in sale;
Lest men sayne thou art honge betene,
Or else a gloten that alle men wytene.
* * * * *
Let never thy cheeke be made too grete
With morselle of brede that thou shalle ete;
An apys mow men sayne he makes
That brede and flesh in his cheke bakes.*

Nan Yorke had a knack of recalling and applying what she read with a happy quickness, which, without any deceit in the honest and lively girl, gave her the air of possessing yet brighter parts and more extensive knowledge than she could claim; Cicely kept all she had acquired, and pondered it in her little head and heart, and digested it there, to bear good fruit, of sense, feeling, patience, and pity, after many days.

There could not have been a greater mistake than to suppose these daughters of Master Yorke illiterate in their own day, or in any day.

* Publications of the Percy Society.

Dost compare their limited field, ploddingly and privately pursued, with the sciences and languages which a young lady rushes over in the nineteenth century? Bethink thyself, according to the same reasoning, the great Sir Isaac would be placed beneath some schoolboy with excellent 'People's Informations' and 'Family Instructors' at his finger-ends, and that would be one way of 'turning the world upside down.'

The afternoon sun is slanting with a golden light into the old hall—tipping deer-horns and rusty habergeons—falling on Master Yorke at his studies—and Goodman Gil returning in silence from the outfields, bending under his burden of trusses of straw, billets of wood, a string of birds, or a haunch of venison, such trifles as a family requires in the daily wear and tear of existence—or Goodwife Grizel drawing ale, turning the shoulder of mutton, tossing the buttered eggs, immersed in the mysteries having respect unto the approaching supper—or Nan leaning idly over the railing of the gallery, with her lute between her fingers, and her blithe eyes looking out for amusement—on Cicely, still sitting on her stool at the head of the opposite stair, soberly completing the round of those excellently contrived hose, but stopping suddenly when her ball breaks from her, and starts on a vagrant course, leaping from step to step, to fling up her hands and laugh at some conceit of her own. 'Look here, Nan, is it not like mad Ralph Neville, when he escaped

from his argument with good Master Dyer, to bounce about his services, his travels, his forbears, jumping from one to another, in much such a roving, reckless fashion. Marry, the ball has the best of it, for it rests at the bottom of the stairs. Come now, sister Nan, Grizel is ready to lay the cloth, if we be set to help her—the mutton is at its richest brown, the eggs at their golden flakiness, and the ale, in its bells and creamy froth to quench my father's thirst.'

'To clear his throat from the gold-dust that is in it; dost see, Cicely, he is examining his crucible, brought in from his outer den, for the remains of the black stone shipped home by the sea captains. We'll be making our fortunes soon, and powdering our sooty hair with the shining particles, as the good man says the Roman ladies did—a dangerous lesson, but I dare to say they had somebody to busk for,' alleges Nan, half skipping, half swimming down stairs, and tossing her crow's head in a very unoppressed and unmiserly fashion.

These girls always rise up before the mind's eye in connexion with their old oak stairs and gallery. They were their peculiar property—their withdrawing-room they named them—and at morning, noon, or night, it was hard to peep in without discovering one or other leaning over their wide wooden balcony, where each rib of their screen was heavily fluted and finished with a capital of leaves. Now it was Nan from her watch-tower giving supernumerary

directions to Grizel about the heating of the oven, or the clotting of the cream, scolding in her childish zeal, and being scolded again with the mixture of respect and authority with which a true nurse ever regards her brood; or eagerly waving her kerchief, or else frowardly turning her straight young back, as a sign to gay Dick Yorke when he chose to make a welcome sally from his attendance on his master at some of the royal progresses on his clodhopping kin: or anon it might be Cicely industriously casting up accounts with a bit of chalk on a board hung on the wall, feeding her pigeons, pensively watching the lustrous moon as it sailed slowly by the open door, or singing gleefully the old song, 'But have you brought gold in store, sir?' nodding her head with the little peaked cap which she would wear, and beating her foot with its great rose-knot in perfect accompaniment.

Now the family are placing themselves at supper at the same board—the squire and the damsels above, the goodman and his goodwife below the salt—with the punctiliousness which these poor folks of high degree instinctively preserved, and which their domestics never dreamt of invading; and after the master's grace—never bating a hair's-breadth of its manful holiness for all his crazed arcana—to the meal, with what appetite their early hours, simple habits, and quiet consciences afford.

CHAPTER IV.

DICK THE COURTIER.

NAN stood at noon in the stone porch scattering grain to the fat cocks, the turkey poults, and young pheasants, while around her gathered the cows coming in to the mid-day milking, the calves lowing and butting, the rough black pony accustomed to be petted with bits of bread and apples, and even the higher-bred mare neighing and switching her tail after notice, while the deep-mouthed mastiff stretched his chain, yawned, and slobbered over the nearer approach of his mistress.

Mistress Nan looked her best. She was in the early noon of life, and the sun did not beat on her head hotly, pitilessly, and harassingly: it but flooded the strong, joyous girl with light, warmth, and brilliance. Nan stood with one foot advanced, her riding-dress (so termed by courtesy) drawn over the same arm which poised tantalizingly the basket of seed nigh as high as her head—scattering the grain with the other taper, sun-burnt hand. Her

dress was of purple cloth, laced in front with amber; made with large puffs at the shoulders—a fashion which rendered the rounded waist and arm slender in their buxom youth; her lace cuffs ran high almost to the elbow, and about her throat was a full cambric ruff—its snowy whiteness and crisp precision relieving the brown tint of the skin, and on the raven locks gathered back to an elaborate cluster of curls on the top of the head, rested a little miniver cap. Rich was the tint of the young beauty's cheek, and harmonious the hue of the marked, well-formed nose and chin left thus exposed to the summer wind and the broad sunshine.

At a little distance a murmur of conversation issued from the lattice window, and tracing it to its source the stranger might come on Master Richard Yorke, seated for his few moments of repose before dinner, and resting on the high back of his chair, his other fair daughter, Cicely, similar in dress to her sister, save that her hair was covered by a caul of silk thread confined at one side by triple white roses, and her skirt was linked light and short, and she wore a fine white linen apron with a bib of the same, in place of a stomacher, and at her girdle the household keys, curiously inlaid and embossed, as Master Yorke brought them from Italy—and as she spoke she stooped down and played with the great seal at the squire's gold chain, as if she loved all that related to him.

Nan's court was a rough one, but she did not re-

ject its members; she was counting them while she fed them, before satisfying her own wants. 'You Brown Bess, brown like the Yorkes, are my lady companion, to whom I give my confidence; you must not presume, madam, or be guilty of malice and falset; you, Warden, are my gentleman usher, I will give you a bone, sir, by-and-by; and you, shaggy Rover, are my caroche and my six Flanders mares in one. The poultry are my pages and my other minions—Fie, you are all too malapert—there, go, go, good folks.'

'Whom dost thou dismiss so unceremoniously, fair Nan—not all thy servants, I pray and trust?' called a light voice behind her, which caused her to start violently, and drop both basket and skirt; but before the speaker could spring across the old moat from the spot where he had hailed her, Nan had recovered herself, and executing a profound curtsey, demanded imperiously, 'Hath Dick the courtier come down from the moon to ask his poor cousins how the beeves fatten, and what the wool brings a pound, if the land-rails still sound their rattles of nights, and the frogs croak in the fens, and whether eels are always high in Cambridge—the only things that they wot of at Barne-elms.'

'From a nearer but scarce more cordial quarter, most comely loftiness,' the young man answered, mockingly; 'from doing my lord's private behest to my Lord Seymour at his summer lodgings in Cambridge—and not to gather country prices, but to

ascertain how much friendship his free, humble, happy blood relations continue to bear the poor over-ridden, surfeited Dick Yorke.'

'Surfeited it may be, but a pickle of corn or a bryony berry for the jading and the work,' wagered Nan, contemptuously.

'My loftiness is scornful, as usual; and yet I must crave leave to remind her that she is but a May-queen, and that the grand court ladies receive their bondsmen more kindly.'

'It is false,' declared Nan, boldly; 'I know better. I have heard how the Queen's Grace, whom we had the happiness to see the other day, God long preserve her maiden state, keepeth you men in proper order.'

'Ay, Dudley, whose head is so firm on his shoulders that he has no fear it may roll off like my Lord Guildford's, or his Grace their father's, or his premier Grace their grandfather's. Hark ye, Nan, canst read the last riddle that only fearless tongues dare put? Query—In what respect is a certain great lord allied to a barber? Answer—They are both mighty familiar with the block. Dudley, though no true bear, notwithstanding he hath the Neville's badge, and possession is nine-tenths of the law, would fain cajole and conquer the lion's whelp, and he must needs tremble when she stirs, but we, who have nothing to win and nothing to lose in so ticklish a manner, why—although we do not fail in loyalty, and yield to no man in our devotion to our most wise and beautiful princess—we speak our

minds, and demand our due in all courtesy, much as we did under Harry, whose maw for wives equalled his solid flesh and blood. In your ear, Nan, our sovereign lady likes no lad the worse for holding the reins with a high hand over women in general, provided he makes one striking exception.'

'It is false, false, Dick Yorke,' repeated Nan, vehemently, 'your ill word of the justest, truest princess in Europe. You are guilty of a spiteful license, Dick, because some high dame hath failed to admire your garters or your hatband.'

'Not I, by the rood, Nan. I dress to please myself. No high dame, however noble, or however winsome, saving your judgment, hath leave to trouble me,' quoth Dick, cavalierly.

'A vain boast—and bragging is the original tree on which lying is grafted. Gil hath introduced that gardening trick into our garden, and no pippins are to be seen like ours, far or near. If lies had as excellent a flavour in the telling, and were as easy of digestion, it would need all Master Dyer's lectures and Cicely's strictness to keep me from speaking them as glibly as my kinsman.'

'I spoke the truth as I am a gentleman, though truth be so hard to come by in a nobleman's train that you need not to apologize for me. Stay, Nan, is Ciss hard?'

'Mortal hard on sin.'

'And on what is sweet cousin Nan severe?'

'On folly, coxcomb.'

'What, not upon audacity? Then I will even salute thee lovingly, Nan, the very next time we meet after an absence.'

'I defy his Grace of Norfolk's man,' cried Nan, furiously; 'there never yet was a nobleman's follower who was not impudent, or a court Jack who was not also a jackanapes.'

'Softly, softly, Mistress Nan, or I must shut thy vinegar mouth e'en now. Tut, I'm marvellously fond of vinegar, madam.'

'Father,' exclaimed Cicely, 'there is Dick Yorke quarrelling with Nan; peace is over for the nonce.'

'What hath brought Dick? But he is very welcome, heartily welcome, though he be no scholar—knows but the Rule of Three—cannot construe six lines, but he is a quick lad in horse flesh, and sword exercise, and in dancing, I warrant, and in reading men's minds and keeping their secrets, I should not wonder; for he is a sharp lad, and discreet enough when it suits his purpose; and he is a kind imp, every inch of him. Nan must not be too free or peevish with the lad, lest he take it in ill part, and mistake his reception. Holloa! Dick. Good day to thee, glad to see thee, kinsman. Come in and bestow thy greeting on thine elder, thou unmannerly varlet, and tell me what news.'

Dick obeyed deliberately, as if he had no such mind to escape his young cousin's banter and huffs as his uncle supposed.

Dick the courtier looked a youth who bore the

burden of the world bravely, and who would not be easily daunted—not by so finely-tempered and dexterously handled a weapon as a woman's tongue. He was a lad of Lee the student's age, with a very light and elegant figure and a lively face, bearing traces of his Yorke descent. He had the dark hair and eyes and warm olive complexion, in conjunction with very irregular features. The merry, bold face was not amiss, because it indicated more of the good-humoured, volatile, yet shrewd and hardy gallant, than the accomplished and ardent aspirant after fame. He was dressed with great care, although simply, as beseemed a country visitor and a traveller, and his spurs were on his heels, although he had left his dags at his saddle-bow. He wore a surcoat, jerkin, and hose of green cloth, fine in quality, and laid, against the statute, with silver lace; his sword-belt and scabbard were of velvet, and his long riding-boots were fringed with silk; he had no ruff, but fair falling bands worked, and his beaver was from the last block—while the jet line of his mustache had acquired by training the true haughty curl upwards with which Raleigh's was afterwards favoured by nature. He answered Master Yorke frankly and with deference—but not without a struggling double-dash of affectation and tomfoolery, which humours preponderated greatly when he was turned over to Cicely and Nan, as was the case when the meal was finished, and the worthy squire had recourse to his afternoon's period of study.

Master Dick had ate his victuals with commendable decorum, and without any unbecoming fastidiousness or extravagant airs; but now he chose to show off before the girls, and particularly to nettle Nan, by assuming a very condescending tone—half provoking their envy, half playing upon their credulity, by his gossip of court pageants, noble suits, and poetical devices. The three sat at one end of the gallery looking down on the family-room; Cicely and Nan were at their holiday embroidery—Nan flowering cambric napkins with black silk in very magpie taste, and Cicely engaged in the more ingenious and difficult task of covering a sheet or coverlet of linen with 'fowls, beasts, and worms,' in versicolour silks, the designs her own, and the execution affording a curious specimen of artistic talent untrammelled by the rules of art—and Master Dick, half-sitting, half-reclining, a few steps below them on the oaken stair.

Nan was the most incensed by the fine gallant's assumption, at the same time she was the wildest to catch the reflection of this state and splendour; but Cicely liked to set him discoursing on the masks, becoming more and more a chosen pastime. The Queen was at Westminster, where there had been bull-baiting and solemn dancing for her pleasure; and her Grace had entertained a concert of viols, harps, sackbuts, and bagpipes, much to her cheer. She had gone to St. Mary Spittle to hear a sermon, attended by a thousand men in harness, with shirts

of mail, corselets, and morice pikes, ten great pieces, drums and trumpets, two morris dancings, and a cart with two white bears, as she had piously kept her Maundy with washing the feet of twenty old women, and presenting them with gowns; and finally she had supped with the Earl of Arundel, much to the delectation of those who were permitted to share even remotely in the lordly feast.

'And what was the most esteemed dish, I prithee, Dick, if thine eyes and ears sufficed for its acquaintance?'

'A pie of carps' tongues, or methinks a pheasant drenched in ambergris; I tasted them both after I had done waiting on Lady Hailes.'

'You mean you dabbed an Italian fork in the cold remains as a lacquey carried it past you. A pheasant drenched in ambergris! How should it taste, Cicely?'

'I cannot tell, Nan, unless it were marvellously like a smell.'

'Why there lay its delectableness, Shell-ears; but it should less affect thee than Diamond-tongue;' for Dick had the besotted absurdity of the generation, which extended to Elizabeth when she styled her Vice-Chamberlain and Lord Chancellor Hatton—elevated to the woolsack for his incomparable dancing, a singular qualification for a statesman—her 'sheep' and her 'lids,' or her 'sweet lids.' Thus it pleased Dick Yorke to distinguish his cousins by quaint and queer pet titles, apportioned according to

the habitual gibes of Nan, and unobtrusiveness of Cicely.

'And what were the novelties in costume, cousin Dick, an' you yourself were not the bravest?'

'It were hard to say, they were so numerous. There was her Grace with a gold stork in her bosom, in compliment to Hans Casimir, Prince Palatine; and my Lady Paulet with diamonds in the clocks of her stockings; and Lord Thomas Howard with a silver band passed scarfways across his breast, bearing his motto for a posie; and Master Staunton with an entire suit of crimson and gold cloth and an emerald collar, and a little gold-set mirror at his girdle, wherein to contemplate his matchless charms; but on my honour, Mademoiselles, my own quilted grey satin doublet, slashed with scarlet, and pointed with bone-lace, was of an absolute fancy, and so widely admired, that I half expect my promotion to the place of gentleman pensioner among the picked men of the king 'om.'

'For shame, Dick, you carry it too far; we don't believe you, man, on the one hand, and on the other, heardest thou ever of a certain rash animal that puffed out its sorry skin until it burst, Dick Yorke? And dost take it as thy model on account of the French alliance? Certes, his Grace of Norfolk, who could wed a Catholic heiress, will favour so Catholic a match.'

'His Grace is a good Protestant and a true Englishman, and by no means so papistically inclined as

his fellow-subjects will have him, since he reckons an offshoot of the sour, non-juring house of Barne-elms in his household, merely because his mother's mother was a poor Howard.'

'The Barne-elms faith is not spotless, when one of its stock serves a parcel Romanist, and may be in danger of himself becoming an apostate.'

'Peace, peace, for heaven's sake, Nan!' exclaimed Cicely, reproachfully. 'His Grace's honesty is not doubted; besides, my father says there be honest men of all Christian persuasions; and Master Dyer allows that a massmonger may desire and deal truly by superior and inferior.'

'Better meddle with less dangerous matters, Diamond-tongue,' asserted Dick, dryly, 'else that restless member of thine may lose its tip.'

'Tell us of the masks, Dick,' solicited Cicely, as Nan looked half scared, half offended by these warnings.

'Which masks, my severe judges, for I declare I have been examined in a witness-box for the last hour. There have been scores and hundreds of masks since the masks of 'The Red and White Roses,' and of 'Deborah,' eftsoons, at her Grace's coronation, whereof spectators have given me full and particular accounts.'

'Describe them to us, dear Dick; we hear no such stories elsewhere; they are as good as plays, or as *Amadis de Gaul*. Now don't be chary, and coy, and crabbed, sweet Dick, kind Dick, and we

will work a horse-cover for you, or a kneeling-cushion, or a pair of pantofles; only do vouchsafe us your narratives.'

'Ah, how the birds can sing and lure when they wish to get anything out of a poor fellow; and how Shell-ears can find a voice and transcend Diamond-tongue!' protested Dick, languidly, nothing loth either to enter upon his descriptions, from Elizabeth of York apparelled in the petals of a great white rose, and Henry Tudor engulfed in a mighty red, and bluff King Hal with poor Anne Boleyn and puissant Elizabeth issuing from a whole bush of red and white blossoms; and Deborah in hood and farthingale under her own fig-tree—a matron yet so single-handed that she formed a fit representative for her who declared, on her introduction to her faithful Commons in the glorious prime of her twenty-sixth year, that she would bear the inscription on her tomb, 'Here lieth Elizabeth, which reigned a virgin and died a virgin'—to the miracle mask of the 'Ten Virgins,' performed lately by the maids of honour; and if he had been able to foresee events, doubtless the glib and graphic young courtier would have proceeded to yet more renowned pieces—to Sidney's mask of 'The Lady May;' Ben Jonson's mask of 'Blackness,' in which Anne of Denmark played as one of the Moors; 'The Memorable Mask,' by Campion, when the palace of Whitehall was fitted up like a stage—when the Bower of Flora was opposed to the House

of Night, and nine of Apollo's knights met and were coupled with the Hours—down to the divine mask of 'Comus' by great John Milton.

Not being prophetical, Dick Yorke ended with a summary of the gala of the day performed at the marriage of Lady Lucy Stanley with Sir Philip Basset—an unreasonable ceremony, which the Queen, wonderful to say, deigned to suffer, and even to contemplate, and which fantasy was founded on the ballad of 'The Not Browne Mayde.'

The two Yorkes demurred at the text as ill-chosen for the occasion, and not likely to propitiate the Queen's Grace, notwithstanding the young man maintained that Elizabeth was in no way angered, but watched with much interest the issue of the pleading of the enamoured woman rendered allegorical, cut down into various personages representing sundry independent moral qualities, only agreeing in still addressing 'the one banished man'—avowing, as she was crowned Queen, he was hard to please, and only becoming discontented and displeased when the case was won by the extreme humiliation of the abstract petitioner—crying hastily, 'Pardie! that was no honest or modest virtue which could listen to the insolent pretence of a rival, and propose a mean compromise—that was a man's notion, by the Lord, a dastardly, disparaging conclusion;' and, as an additional sample, Dick sang one of the songs introduced between the

scenes—that jaunty strain of Wyatt's, 'The Recured Lover,' beginning—

I am as I am, and so will I be.

In truth, in the midst of the homage offered to Elizabeth, there was a reaction, not only in the shape of the unbridled license with which humbler women were sometimes treated, but in the strong sarcasm which feminine humours and ridiculous claims, whenever they were indulged, drew down upon them, alternately with extravagant flattery, from most influential quarters. Witness Shakspeare's 'Taming of the Shrew' and Massinger's 'City Madam.' Men did not always hesitate to assume their just supremacy—no, not under the maiden Queen; and Elizabeth was no woman to abet the haughtiness and frowardness of any daughter, or sister, or, alake! of any fool-wife within her sphere. She hated the condition of wedlock, which she had forbidden to herself; but after they had once accepted it, in defiance of her opinions, she would have held her ladies to their most stringent obligations, were it only for better illustration of the evils to be expected under Hymen's mocking, malign sway. She would have sentenced them to be very drudges to their acknowledged superiors. Be it remembered that Elizabeth was the wisest woman in her dominions.

'So e'en improve your time, my pretty lasses, accept the first swain who louts down at your knee,'

recommended Dick, sententiously; but Nan raised such a storm, and started up so quickly, casting reel, kerchief, needle, and all at the offender, that he not only ran down the stairs at a bound, a hand on each ear, and his head ducked, as Ferdinand fled from Ariel, but Master Yorke raised his eyes, and even Cicely was arrested in her industry.

'The first that comes, the uncourteous madcap!' Cicely exclaimed aloud; but she said to herself candidly, 'first and last, none will come to seek the daughters of the ruined Squire of Barne-elms, for what man weds without portion or power to buy his condescending hand? Well, Nan and I will be no Nut-brown Maids to go suing and begging for husbands. We do not list; we will work, and laugh, and say our prayers, and tell our tales, and grow wizened and grey-headed, verily after a bright instance, that of our godly and illustrious Queen. When she sits lonely on her throne, no man can cry shame on us, poor homely spinsters, remaining single, as we mind our housewifery and our laundrie, our cookery and our chirurgery.'

Cicely had not read the advice of Lord Burleigh to his son, though it bore out some portion of her reverie. It was characteristic of the quiet wariness and open mercenariness, not to say underlying, but woven as warp and woof with the gallantry of the period. Indeed, how could it be thought that the grossness and arbitrariness of Henry's reign would subside and leave no sign. They did ebb

under Elizabeth, but they did not cease to exist, and broke out anew with good-natured, time-serving, coarse gossip Jamie.

'When it shall please God to bring thee to man's estate,' writes good Burleigh, very reverently for what is to follow, 'use great providence and circumspection in choosing thy wife, because it is an action of life, like unto a stratagem of war, wherein a man can err but once. If thy estate be good, match near at home and at leisure; if weak, far off and quickly.' Then, after further suggestions, he says plainly—'Let her not be poor, how generous soever, for a man can buy nothing in the market with gentility.' *Buy in the market!* that is the trader's end in the alliance. But to give the wise and worthy statesman his due, he warns carefully against an extravagant pursuit of wealth, that is, clutching at it, irrespective of baseness, uncomeliness, dwarfishness, and particularly—folly. The presence of the latter quality in a woman, he expressly states, will be 'a continual disgrace,' and he subjoins, how pithily! 'it will yirke thee to hear her talk,' 'for thou shalt find it to thy great grief;' he would fain impress the fact 'that there is nothing more fulsome than a she fool.' Let the great man be forgiven the hollowness and covetousness which rung sadly through the beginning of his counsel for the sake of the warmth and earnestness with which he protests against this flaw, to him so fatal. Whoever has the singular misfortune to be 'yirked' as he

describes, may console himself with the consideration that the noble Burleigh, who had in himself 'a pretty wit-rack to make the dumb to speak, and to draw speech out of the most silent and sullen guests at his table,' somehow understood his trial thoroughly — notwithstanding it might have been by force of contrast, since his first wife was a daughter of the learned Sir John Cheke's, and his second one of the no less scholarly Coke's, that 'admirable Mildred,' his most intimate companion for forty-five years.

'I cry thee down, Ciss, if thou canst grant me grace,' called Dick, nonchalantly, from the porch. 'While your father stretches himself, see who is the wooer who at this very moment pricketh amain on his own long legs across the Chase.'

CHAPTER V.

THE COLLEGE FELLOW

MASTER LEE, I hasten to record the honour which so honourable and learned a gentleman doth my poor rude house of Barne-elms by appearing among us. We are but sparing of our books and our knowledge, sir, after Trinitas and Corpus Christi, but we know how to value attainments in others, and we joy to learn each fresh question discussed in the Studentium—the spiritual El Dorado, eh, Master Lee? though the Goth put a poor interpretation on books, and would leave them to the Greeks, crying 'Græcis hanc pestem relinquite, quæ dubium non est quin brevi omnem iis vigorem ereptura Martiosque spiritus exhaustura sit; ut ad arma tractanda plane inhabiles futuri sint.' You take me, Master Lee?' appealed the squire, addressing the poor scholar with much greater ceremony and respect than he had greeted Dick the courtier.

Master Lee answered sedately, that he was

beholden to Master Yorke, and that he prayed to be permitted to return with his own hand, and with his duty for the same, Master Yorke's *Chronica Hollandiæ*, lent to him on the occasion of their meeting at the house of their worshipful friend, Dr. Sandys.'

That was the age of book-lending. Contemporary diaries prove how much men were indebted to their neighbours' libraries, how weighty was the trust involved in a rare volume, and how a philosopher could chronicle as a notable horror:—'2nd August, my terrible dream that Master Kelly wold by force bereave me of my bokes, toward day-break.'

Master Lee was grave as any doctor, and although he made a suitable reverence to Master Yorke's daughters, he scarcely looked at them; yet Cambridge and its Halls had heard of their family beauty.

Master Yorke was intent upon doing the honours of his country-house with all his ability to his brother scholar, holding in his unworldly wisdom—as uncommon and as fine a feature then, as after the creation of Don Quixote, and as in the generation which has made much of Tom Newcome—that a poor man of high intellect and extensive erudition deserved the utmost service and homage that he could bestow, and paid him a compliment by consenting to receive his tribute. Albeit Master Lee was no swiller or drinker, Master Yorke would

call loudly for his best Malmsey, and filling his tallest glasses, press it on his guest, temperate as himself, yea; as those foreign printers and writers with whom Master Yorke had herded abroad, and on whose spare habits and deep researches he ever insisted fondly, while he questioned him with gusto of the last doings at the University—whether he had tested the elixir of salts, what new piece Henslowe had issued in London, and wherein the doctors at home had agreed in their dispute on hexameters.

Lee satisfied him in his direct fashion and at large, that there was little doing in letters; men were mad on those adventures in the other world, would sooner be buccaneers than bookmen—or else they sought court favour, would rather tilt in armour than read in a gown for a prize; the infection was felt at the colleges, although tournaments were forbidden within five miles; then there was the Irish business taking up the public mind. The most promising affair that had occurred at the schools very lately, and it fell out at Oxford, was but a contest betwixt a couple of lads—to wit, a public disputation carried on with much spirit by one Master Philip Sidney and another Master Richard Carew, a gentleman commoner of Christchurch, only fourteen years old, and yet of three years' standing, before my Lords Warwick and Leicester, the two uncles of the first, and in which both the speakers argued most fairly. It was good to distinguish rising merit, and recognise

the world's interest in the same. Certes, 'youths' were soon men in this generation'; he had knowledge of my Lord Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex's son, being about to take his degree of Master of Arts, and he but sixteen. By reason of the tricks of the Franciscan friars, 'surprising children into their order,' and into the colleges, the Chancellor and University had long ago made an order, never very attentively observed, that none should be taken upon the books under eighteen years of age. Now-a-days the only use of this prohibition was to fright scholars of small stature with the peculiar tradition that 'none are to commence who are not higher than the beadle's staff,' and whatever they made a moan of in his memory, they could not complain of any want of precocity.

Master Yorke stroked his beard, and said he was happy to hear of these young clerks, and finished without a particle of satire, that he doubted not their high rank had as little as possible to do with their youthful credit, and he hoped their parts would shine out in their future lives, and render the reign of Elizabeth glorious. Then the two talked of the new college, and whether worthy Dr. Caius were a papist, or no; and of Master Cartwright's late sermons, and the scholars' renunciation of the surplices; and next, as neither was over fond of polemics, but much preferred pure learning, Master Yorke craved Master Lee's opinion of those 'spiritual creatures, and fire all in a flame,' of whose appear-

ance in certain chambers at midnight many had notice; and had the young man experimented in horoscopes, or formed any conclusion on the laws of judicial astrology; was he clearly avised how far the presence of certain planets, in certain houses and under special signs, indicated humours and conditions of body and mind, and fortunate and malignant occurrents, and whether by their beams, or some impalpable vapour, they affected, moulded, and controlled the will—a doctrine which, when driven to an extreme, some maintained a most desperate and blasphemous tampering with the text of Holy Scripture.

To all these searching and overpowering demands on his information and reflection, Master Lee responded simply and a little coldly, as if he suspected a witch-finder's pincers and boring-awl at his elbow, while he was as well convinced that learned Master Yorke was devoid of wicked intent, as the people in the north believed that the dove was without the gall. But all the same, the 'spiritual creatures,' haunting weak minds, or evoked by strong ones, conveyed so little valuable truth of this wonderful world and its philosophy, that Master Lee cared not for them. If the stars, those dim intelligences, had yielded the secret of their elements and their courses, in place of interpreting the paltry and passing accidents affecting private and mean men, he would have thought it much more to the purpose, and within the cycle of their age and dignity.

To rouse Lee from his indifference and his wavering credulity, Master Yorke read an account contained in the copy of an attested letter which had fallen into his hands, and which he valued duly. The testimony bore that, 'August 22nd, Ann, my nurse, had long byn tempted by a wycked spirit, but this day it was evident how she was possessed of him. God is, hath byn, and shall be, her protector and deliverer! Amen. August 25th.—Ann Frank was sorowfol, well-comforted, and stayed, in God's mercyes acknowledging.—August 26th, at night, I anoynted (in the name of Jesus) Ann Frank, her brest, with the holy oyle. August 30th, in the morning.—She required to be anoynted, and I did very devoutly prepare myself, and pray for vertue, and power, and Christ his blessing of the oyle to the expulsion of the wycked one, and then twyse anoynted; the wycked one did resist a while. September 8th.—Ann Frank wold have drowned hirself in my well, but by divine providence I cam to take her up befor she was overcome of the water. September 29th.—Nurse Ann Frank most miserably did cut her owne throte, afternone, about four of the clok, pretending to be in prayer before her keeper, and suddenly and very quickly rising from prayer, and going toward her chamber, as the mayden her keeper thought, but indede straightway down the stayrs into the hall of the other howse, behinde the doore, did that horrible act, and the mayden who wayted on her at the stayr-fote, followed her, and

missed to fynde her in three or four places, tyll at length she hard her rattle in her owne blode.'

Dick Yorke and his Cousin Nan soon tired of this abstruse discussion, and stole out into the neighbouring pleasance, whence resounded their cheery voices and frequent laughter; but Cicely sat still in her corner, and regarded the monastic guest with the close observation and fanciful analysis natural to such women.

How his eyes sought the ground! Was he merely of a melancholic temper, or was that an evil index? When he did meet her glance, it was with the fair test of a full, though dim look—inverted, cold; it made her shiver, so antipathetical was it to her warm blood and teeming sensations. Was the soul of the rapt student wedded to his eternal shadows? For what were they, these data, these deductions and solutions on which her companions laid such stress, but the shadows of substances which Master Lee rejected; the faint reflex and refuse of that glowing, vivid daily life from which he stood apart. Alas! poor stoic; and she heard him reckoning the stars removed from all sympathy with mortals, while she had read that both sun and moon had been made to give them sensible light, and why not the twinkling far-away stars to aid the soul, as the nearer served the body? The material claimed what was closer and more notorious; the spiritual what was wider and more hidden, yet of greater moment; for sure those myriads of smaller orbs

overweighed the flaming sun and pale moon. Moreover, did not those more earthly planets slacken and stand still to benefit the Lord's captain in the Valley of Ajalon? How did Master Lee interpret that miracle, if indeed he had not sunk into profane and accursed infidelity; but glancing fearfully at the handsome, patient young man, Cicely could not bear to pronounce so hard a verdict.

Master Lee was proceeding to mention to Master Yorke, with a little exultation dashed by a not improper shyness, that he had, within the last se'en days, been elected a Fellow of his college, and so could pursue his studies without fear of more molestation from cruel necessity, but, on the contrary, was liberally provided in estate for life.

Master Yorke congratulated him with great kindness, drank his health, and almost sighed that he could not be a Fellow, to sleep under the vast charmed roof, and be dieted by the commons' table of one of the great colleges, and read and ponder for all the days of his life, without farther hindrance than the founders had decreed to their disciples.

Cicely had very different thoughts of a Fellowship, with its genteel dole, and its obligation to grow grey without kindred. What was it but to be deprived of more animated and sweeter bosom friends than acquaintances and rivals, and those idolized books and cabalistic instruments—but dull characters on senseless parchments, or cold metal to the failing eye and the dizzy brain—to come in fagged from tutorship

or chaplainship, and find no more genial company in the close and dusty chamber than a printed page or a brazen circle—to have no brave young wife to regard and rule, no helpless little children to sit on his knees, no foolish daughters like herself and Nan to tease and chide—no grieved but hopeful children to take their last look of his clay-cold face, put the rosemary within his stiff hand, and think to follow him where his Master and theirs had promised to receive them to love, and holiness, and blessedness.

Even the Lord Bishops might marry, though her Grace was known to discourage the practice, and reported to have addressed the wife of Archbishop Parker with the cutting commentary — 'Madam I may not call you, Mistress I am ashamed to call you, and so I know not what to call you.' But there was no hope for a Fellow while he retained his Fellowship, and Master Lee had certainly no intention of relinquishing the post 'free from the detrimental cares of insuring a livelihood for the term of his natural existence;' thus he descanted, without reservation, on his prospects.

And what call had Master Lee to accept this endowment, with its selfish, slavish conditions? It was otherwise with herself and Nan—besides, women fared better than men in a state of celibacy; but out upon him! he might now have buttered sage for breakfast in place of furmitory, and stale ale stirred with cinnamon and sugar as a substitute for clean

water. But her father had told her a scholar's commons did not extend to pasties and Bourdeaux; and for this amendment and its continuance he assumed this bondage, and forfeited, without a sigh, the chance of dear household ties.

Poor man! in his strong-limbed, comely prime.

Cicely, like most of her sex, was guilty of the egotism and violent partiality of believing man's life, without the light of womankind at his hearth, comfortless and bleak as a desert, and her religion, revolting at all that savoured of popery, admitted of no compensation for this exception to the general law—this refusal of the simple good. Master Lee's ambitious, steadfast future lay before the girl empty as the somewhat fine and unnerved hand, so like her father's, which rested on the sill of the window in whose embrasure Master Yorke had installed his guest in his own seat of honour.

Cicely did not like to see a stranger there, where she was accustomed to regard her father, in the chair on whose high back she was wont to lean for many a privileged peep over the scholar's shoulder—a tolerated intruder on his most difficult task. Master Lee's presence there struck her with a sense of personal restraint, a baffled, repulsed fancy, hard, vexatious, as if he were the arbiter of her destiny—as if she solicited his notice and craved his courtesy in vain. Still how wisely he was discussing with her father the alteration of the calendar—with what forethought and enterprise men like him submitted

to self-abnegation that others might reap the harvest of their labour and devotion. He fasted from common joys that his neighbours might feast on the results of his uninterrupted skill and unbroken toil —his unbent mind in the end to be riven suddenly, like a goodly bow over-long strung. It made her envious to listen to him.

Cicely was withdrawn from her musings by the growing noisiness of Nan and Dick, whose mimic war and idle laughter waxed nearer and nearer, and louder and louder; until, as it sounded close to the lattice where Master Lee sat with Master Yorke, Cicely hurried out, fearing it would rudely disturb the staid and severe conversation within, and apprehending some deliberate act of mischief from the zest of their mirth. Nan was capable of much madness, and Dick the courtier, for all his finery, was but a wilding, as apt for sport as a schoolboy; his court life had polished, but had not yet ballasted him; her father would be displeased—Master Lee, sober as a divine, outraged. Cicely had not much confidence in her own power of checking folly: nay, it is to be feared, for all her grave reflections, her overflowing youth tingled with a temptation to join in the scandal; but she put a force on herself, and hoped to exercise a little control over the conspirators.

Cicely was not mistaken. Cousin Dick, reaching forward on tiptoe, was in the act of depositing a prickly ball of a young hedgehog in the

new-made Fellow's inert hand, lying so invitingly unconscious and open for injury; while Nan held her straight sides, and vibrated through every noble feature and rich tint with pure fun, more like an untrammelled country wench than a lady of degree at any time, but more like a gentle damsel of Elizabeth's era than a well-nurtured maiden of Victoria's day.

Cicely's exit caused a diversion, but no whispered remonstrance or objection on her part put an end to the trick. Dick and Nan would come to a parley, and make a concession—Cicely might herself start the game, that was all.

It must be confessed that, after a short argument, Cicely became infected by the jest, and shared her gossip's and comrade's inclination to commence hostilities with Master Lee. What right had a young man to be as grave as her father? by what title was he above, or they beneath, his notice? If he presented the miracle of an austere hermit rather than a grudging grey friar's head on juvenile shoulders, he should be cautious how he ventured among his kind. Did not the very birds of the wood pursue and peck with screams of derision and disgust, the wretched magpie which fell in and floundered out of Goodman Ambrose's cold dye-vat? They should have their pastime, although she had to cry the squire's mercy afterwards. Her father was easily pacified—it would be but a sharp rebuke —a penitential curtsey, at the worst. Moreover

Cicely, always ingenious, caught at the loophole, that Master Lee was too absent even to be startled—that is, to emit any signs of dismay; and thus in their turn Dick and Nan would be surprised and discomfited.

So as gleeful opportunities came sparingly in their round, and with a double design and compound conception Cicely was drawn away and pricked on to pluck a green sprig from the nearest bush, and gliding forward, amid the breathless interest of her companions, placed it in the loosely curved alm, from which the corresponding head, with its waves of hair, was happily turned.

To Cicely's horror, the languid fingers closed with a nervous grasp, and Master Lee flung round upon her with a blank wonder in his gaze that sent Nan and Dick flying off in fits of uproarious merriment, like heedless, feather-brained boy and girl as they were, and left Cicely unable to escape—the convicted culprit.

'Bear witness, Nan, I am ready to offer him satisfaction on Cicely's part, and give him the sweet revenge of a passage of arms—a duello—that is, when I recover my breath. Oh! ah!' panted Dick, clapping his hand on his sword, and now uttering his amusement in exhausted sighs and sobs.

'Fie, Cicely, what is this?' asked the squire, in chagrin and bewilderment. 'Prithee, sir, pardon my pair of giglets, and that buffoon, Dick Yorke if he be concerned, as I have reason to conjecture.

I hoped they had more nouce, and more decent manners. Forgive them, Master Lee. For shame, Cicely; this liberty is beyond chicks. Chicks! said I, ye ought to be women before strangers.'

Cicely stood confounded, and Master Lee continued to stare in wonder that was dull in so clever a man at the full-grown madcap before him. He knew nothing of girls, this nursling of schools and colleges, and he now looked his fill, inadvertently, on the blushing offender—blushing over smooth brow and down the round throat, yet returning his gaze with an innocent audacity and frank fearlessness of real offence—as if he thus took their measurement.

Before Cicely could perform her would-be humble curtsey, and get off with a sentence saucy in its solemn regret, Master Lee slowly opened his hand, and betrayed the crushed green leaves, and the blood let by the prickles dropping from his fingers.

Cicely cried out with a quick, tender remorse, came yet closer to the lattice, looked up in the young man's face with her brown eyes, now lustrous with moisture, and repeated piteously—

'I crave to be excused, I did not mean to hurt you, it was a sorry piece of child's wit; but I would not have harmed you, sir, not so much as an ache or a nip. Let me stanch the wounds with my kerchief; let me search if any thorns are left in the flesh. Our Goody and I have balm in such cases, if you will but accept it at our hands, worshipful sir.'

It was too absurd! Cicely spoke as if she had severed an artery, or shattered a vital organ, and Master Lee smiled as he coloured—and a handsome face he had when it thus burned for a moment—and turned abruptly away.

'You have not hurt me, mistress; I do not mind a scratch.'

Ah! confident, fool-hardy Master Lee. It was not yet written, 'They jest at scars who never felt a wound;' but you might at least have been suspicious of the magnetic swiftness with which your indolent-looking body had appreciated the approach of another body endowed with the same witching youth, which you had not esteemed, but cast behind your back as a worthless thing. In your astonishment you might have included this puzzle—the thrill in your pulse and tingle in your blood, magical as Dr. Julio's charms, which instantly attacked you when you encountered suddenly at close quarters the bold faultless line of a nose, the delicate curve of a chin, the ruby pearl-lined bow of a mouth, the artful tire of a head, the dead whiteness and stiffness of a ruff—the pure, kind, wilful but loving heart trembling through the whole. That quiver of muscle and surge of calm blood from which you recovered by a disconcerted, discontented effort, might have alarmed you, but you were a doomed man. What could save you?

'It was a branch of thorn I thrust upon the clerk,' murmured Cicely, disconsolately, as she wandered about the pleasance and the chase long after

Master Lee had departed, the squire had forgotten the accident of his children's untoward behaviour, and Dick and Nan, surfeited with their success, had tried some new feint, some fresh excitement of paction and rupture—with Goody Grizel never tired of protesting at their flights and furies, and Goodman Gil just doggedly shunning their perpetual flutter.

'No good in this work, Goodwife,' he growled. 'Men and women should listen, not chatter.'

'Nay, now, Goodman Gil, women at least must speak their minds, else what were their tongues given them for; an' you got them changed few would listen and learn like you, Goodman Gil. Is it the mushrooms you'd toss in the saucepan? wont they poison the whole household, and the master to boot, though he does know a main of antidotes, never found when wanted, like my keys. Wounds! my head is buzzing with this affray; and there is Mistress Cicely, dear soul, going about like a love-lorn lass, or a jilted jill who wears the willow, bearing the whole weight, and itching to cry her eyes out if nobody saw, for a bit of silly nonsense, by all the world as any barn-door frolic, which she undertook off-hand at other folks' instance, though she mun endure the entire charge. A murrain upon Master Dick to bring my girls into disgrace! Ay! women mun chatter, Goodman, and men mun hear them, lest worse hap befall creation.'

'It was a thorn,' moaned Cicely, haunting the

tangled paths to the Cam; 'and there is ill luck in the gift of a thorn, as all but clerkly minds consider. What shall I do if harm chance to this man? Ah, me! Why did I meddle with his apathy? He should have remained a stock or a stone for me. Now I have marred his skin, and I may have crossed his fortunes—I, who would be blessed and not banned. I was not a modest maiden. He will deem scornfully of my sex for me. I deserve to be punished. Alake! the day.'

CHAPTER VI.

'A MOST BRAVE AND SUMPTUOUS MASK FOR A PRIVATE COMPANIE.'

CICELY'S crime and contrition were out of head; that event, as well as all others, was eclipsed by the great affair of the summer at Barne-elms. Dick Yorke was detained some weeks on my Lord of Norfolk's business at Cambridge, and in the chief bestowal of his leisure on his rustical cousins, from being coaxed and importuned to describe again and again the last gala performed by court favour of which he was cognizant, it came that the young man and the sisters were primed to enact a mask of three, of their own, in their family circle—on a lower scale than the performance of the 'Arcades' of Milton, at Horton, by the Countess of Derby's grandchildren; or the representation of 'Comus' by the same Bridgewater brothers and sisters whose benighted woodland walk gave rise to the mighty poet's dream, at Ludlow Castle in 1634.

Master Yorke, enamoured of all that was classical

and intellectual, readily consented to the show and pleasure, although his empty exchequer witnessed against it and demanded a pinching economy in the details. But once on a while, and that his lasses might join in the refined sports of their rank with a fellow in years and station and a near kinsman —true he could ill afford it, and also Master Dyer and some of the authorities of the congregation might object as to a worldly and light amusement—but he should stint the expenses, and have but an audience of one or two friends, and he should select a moral theme fit to impart a lesson in virtue rather than to serve as an incentive to vice. Moreover, he reckoned these plays as not only in themselves blameless, but as supported by the highest authority, although they might be abused to lewd purposes, and, God wot, what custom did not suffer the same treatment. Master Dyer and the congregation censured music and dancing, yet if they studied Scripture they would find that Miriam and her gossips went out to meet Moses with timbrels and dances; and the brother of the Prodigal Son was startled on his return to his father's house where the lost was found—by the sound of praying and psalmody? No, though in verity that was a goodly sound, but by the blatant noise of this said music and dancing. He, Master Yorke, should rule his own household. Let Master Dyer or a deputation of unlettered tradesmen and yeomen manage their assembly, or let them look to their own tokens,

weights and measures, their chalk-mixed flour, and porridge-hearted butter, if they craved the conduct of aught else. He did not mean to slander his neighbours and brother-worshippers; God forbid! on the contrary, he hoped to get good Master Dyer, who was a man of parts and education, to witness and criticise the spectacle, but he would not deprive his lasses of their holiday for an ignorant scruple. And Master Dyer and some of his members having broadly hinted their exceptions, the squire grew yet more resolute in his approbation—a quiet obstinacy being no slight feature in his tranquil, contemplative nature.

Master Yorke was only sorry that he was curtailed in means, time, and company; he should have dearly liked to have overlooked every arrangement—nay, even to have composed the piece (but then Cicely and Nan must have waited years for their entertainment) to be used on their temporary stage. He should have had it fairly writ out, and printed by his friend here, Sibert, to whom Erasmus had intrusted his small tract 'de conscribendis epistolis,' of which he had of course a copy; and he would have further sent it to his old crony, Nicholas Ling, to be sold to admiring dabblers in the fine arts at his shop at the north-west doore of Paul's, or to figure as a ware in request on the much-studied shelves of Hugh Singleton at the sign of the Gylden Tunne in Creed-lane, near unto Ludgate. He would have had a wider scene, a more elaborate effort of genius;

especially he deplored the absence of a Chorus; Dick Yorke reiterating that with only three players nothing intricate or magnificent could be attempted.

As it fell out, and as it generally happens that our pet schemes prove clogged almost beyond our recognition, Dick having to be elected magnate of the Motion, stood out so determinedly and refractorily for his favourites, 'The Patient Grizel,' or 'The Not-browne Mayde,' as the only masked dramas or dramatic masks within his experience admissible under their circumstances—his company had no choice but either to relinquish the project, or relinquish their preferences and prejudices in its fulfilment. Master Yorke in his reasonableness and complacency, and Cicely and Nan, in dread of Dick's coquetry—unable to ply his halting memory or overcome his obdurate will, submitted to his unpalatable decision, and waived their prior wishes and their pets, in order to walk the boards without doubt once in their lives.

The vanquished were rewarded for their pliability which had been brought to bear on the ballad. Why, you would scarcely have known it! for one thing, it was no longer styled by the simple title of 'The Not-browne Mayde,' but had the grandiloquent appellation of 'The Excellent Triumph of Lowlie Meekness over Unparalleled Audacity and Subtile Strategie.' Then personality and human interest were diminished by the idealizing and individualizing the successive appeals of the loving

'Not-browne Mayde' into a train of separate virtues which Cicely and Nan represented alternately, in varying guises; while Dick in his constant seeming of the hard-hearted lover, personated without a break the equivocal union of qualities implied in the terms 'Unparalleled Audacity' and 'Subtile Strategie.'

The stage was not the pleasance, nor yet the chase before the old woodland hall, with the back of a stray tree or overgrown bush for a tiring-room, but merely the railed passage or gallery sacred to Cicely and Nan, where they so often stood and contemplated the business of the day below, or sat absorbed in their own work, conferences, or meditations. The curtain was a great web of old disused tapestry fully unfurled over the high balustrade. In the light of a coincidence or contrast it exhibited the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon; and Gil Flowerdew had embellished its gigantic, shadowy figures by pinning up in front over the faded colours and faulty proportions a coarse foreign print of a woman kneeling with outstretched, upraised arms in a trance or ecstasy. As Gil delivered no communication on the subject, it was not necessary for the Precisians assembled or engaged in the diversion to know that this pity-laden, pleading figure in robe, mantle, slippers, and garland of Florence or Venice, was originally intended for the Virgin Mary interceding with her Son for mercy to his people. Strange to tell, this patchwork was not inappropriate to the ballad material;

for in the days of its great popularity, and the prevalence of the Roman Catholic form of religion, the story had been parodied into a divine song or dialogue between the Lord Christ and his mother, in which the reasoning has often a corresponding pathos and beauty, while there is what the Apostle Paul called a division of the God-Man, and a robbery of grace and goodness from him, the accuser, wherewith to endow the defendant, 'the blessed among women,' as pseudo Queen of Heaven.

It was the eve of St. Margaret's—the old tides were still retained where the Christian mythology of saint and martyr had vanished like a rainbow-tinted mist before the pure light of a simple and sublime vision of the faith given from heaven to earth. Maidens curious to know their future fates no longer kept the vigil of St. Agnes, or in the anguish of toothache cried lustily to St. Barbara, or consoled themselves when they failed to find mates by the notion that they were waiting-women to St. Catherine; that was ended, but men and women still made appointments to cement business or friendship for St. Giles, or St. Ann's, or the Holy Cross. So the eve of St. Margaret's was the night of the family mask at Barne-elms. Night? It was but four of the clock on a summer afternoon—the supper being served at six.

The interlude was to be domestic, and the audience was limited to the squire, Gil, and Grizel; Master Peregrine Hancock, of Swynford, an old

friend, his dame, and their merry grandchildren; Dr. Dorset, of Cambridge, and his proud, passionate daughters; Sir Hugolin Botelier, of Rackheath, an illustrious name, and one which had been heard of in this instance among the Irishry—though what talent and activity the burly knight could display beyond swilling and gormandizing, striking the table at a toast, stamping and swearing, and hewing right and left at a charge, it were hard to discover. Sir Hugolin held some of the current monopolies, and had accumulated great wealth, but, save at table, he was reckoned churlish and miserly in his habits. He was a neighbour of Barne-elms, and 'tis pity to record it, but Master Yorke was under obligations to his rank and substance. Last came the student, Master William Lee, in his solitary person, dragged to the spot sorely against his will, from his halls and groves of Lethe, to satisfy the eager affection of Master Yorke, who prized his good opinion, and could not easily believe in his indifference to vanities. After these worthies followed the attendants of the same.

Gentlemen and ladies, serving-men and women, sat or stood on low, heavy benches, once part of the furniture of the chapel when Barne-elms was of great enough consequence in the country to boast a private place of worship and a family priest, but that dignity was long before the Reformation—and vestments and vessels had escaped a common burning and melting into old ore as idolatrous emblems,

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and only the ponderous seats remained to be dragged from an out-house for this profane occasion.

Master Yorke alone occupied his usual chair, and that from no discourtesy to his guests, or undue assumption of importance as host, but as the result of his consenting to be master of the ceremonies—an important office, which involved some difficulty, although little labour or responsibility. Frankly, Master Yorke was showman, and, seated at the side of the scenes, raised a white rod, and pointing to the gallery and to a scroll elevated above it, and changed with every act, read with a sonorous, composed voice :—'Here beginneth the play; Audacity addresseth the worshipful company.' 'Here cometh Honest Truth.' 'Here followeth High Courage,' &c. &c. Without this proclamation it is like enough that the scrolls, carefully written as they were, with but a few eccentric flourishes, by the squire's own hand, would have been little better than dead letter to Master Peregrine Hancock and his worthy partner with her jaws like nut-crackers, and her piping, kindly voice; to red-faced Sir Hugolin—as to his Irish kern, and to the general body of followers.

The day had been grey and cloudy, which even a high summer's day will be, but there was no want of brilliance within, from the flaring scarlet doublet of Sir Hugolin to the sky-blue with gold ouches of Mistress Maud and Mistress Jane Dorset; others there were soberly put on—Master Hancock in his

unfailing cloth (only removed in quality from hodden grey, with his huge galligaskins stuffed with hair), Mistress Hancock in her russet satin skirt and pourpoint, the children in their simple striped coats, and Master Lee in his dusky gown, with his hood of budge, as sad as a doctor from Padua. Master Yorke wore his churching black velvet suit, his band and ruffles of spotless cambric, and his cap with its bloodstone remained on his head—a relic of the cap of peace only to be removed in the presence of princes, while his grey beard and mustaches were carefully trimmed.

The bells of the great clock tolled the appointed hour; already Nan's pet cows came 'lowing home at e'en,' their milking to be neglected for one diet; in the wide chimney — encumbered by Goody Grizel's manifold preparations for supper, about which she was fain to hover with her assistants for the day—the glowing logs replacing the turf shone ruddily on the dark brown oak, tipped the stags' heads, the gorgets and gauntlets, the Gothic peaks of the chimney-pieces, and glistened on the upturned faces, the peaked beards, the close caps, or the hair brushed up on end, or surmounted by the goodly, glittering chain-work of the tire-valiants.

The mask was no historical drama, like that of Moses Praying against the Philistines, wherein the Dutch were the children of Israel, and the Spaniards the Philistines, and England the Caleb and Joshua

sustaining the potent arms ready to drop through mortal weariness; neither was it of national interest, like the allegorized meeting of Mary of Scotland and Elizabeth at Nottingham Castle, when the Lady Temperantia rode in on a golden lion, and the Lady Prudentia on a red lion, and when Discord and False Report were taken captive (ah, if it had been so!) and committed to the prison of 'Extreme Oblivion' for ever. Neither had it a tithe of the splendour of that revel in which the Royal Dane—the lady of the sweet coffers, the yellow-haired, fiery Queen—took her part; when each nymph, with face, bosom, and arms dyed to ebony, was wreathed with fair pearls, to form a fitting contrast, and crossed the theatre in a shell similar to mother-of-pearl. But sith it were a very small and tame plot, there need be no fear of such another catastrophe as the fall of Paris Garden, fresh in men's minds, by which, after John Field, seven persons were killed, and a hundred and fifty seriously injured—innocent souls who went out to delight themselves with the sport of bear-baiting, and behold what came of it!

The play commenced by the drawing aside of the tapestry—Queen of Sheba and her gifts—and the advance of Dick Yorke out of one of the bedchambers, dressed as a gentleman attending on a champion for the tilt-yard on a day of renown. His hose, jerkin, and short cloak were of three-piled velvet, of the orange-tawny colour, with the watchet, the hues of the reign. Over his dark hair

he wore a black velvet bonnet with a silver band and a white feather; and his rapier was silvered, and sheathed in crimson velvet. Does the dress appear magnificent beyond order and bearing? Turn to the jousts held in honour of Francis of Bourbon's embassy to England, when the Earl of Arundel, Lord Windsor, Mr. Philip Sidney, and Mr. Fulke Greville, calling themselves 'foster-children of desire,' and laying claim to 'the castle or fortress of perfect beauty,' challenged all comers. Weigh like a very armourer or mercer the gilt and engraven steel, the velvet and gold lace, the taffetie and felt, and worsted for the yeomen and grooms, to the very four spare horses, with caparisons of gold 'embroidered with pearl, and some embroidered with gold and silver feathers verie richlie and cunninglie wrought,' belonging to 'the glass of fashion and the mould of form'—Sidney, and forgive poor Dick Yorke for the slight solecism of donning one of his court dresses to grace what was after all but a gathering of country-folks. And do not, oh! do not compare Dick with the second-rate actor who, unable to shake off the distressing sense of his singular finery, struts and rants in evident constraint and awkwardness. Dick was not odd then and there, though charmingly fine in those simple eyes; he had no feeling of fantasticness; he had not a grain of shame for his splendour; and so it became him, as artists will have it that gorgeous colours, rich stuffs, and picturesque

folds would set out cloth-covered, dingily-coloured, ungracefully-draped man; even Dick's irregular features and dark complexion looked very handsome and distinguished in such array, and as he stood forward, and with a profound bow and a wave of the hand commenced the entertainment by speaking a few verses in explanation of his position, in praise of self-mastery and independence, and at the same time in acknowledgment of the power of virtuous love, and not without an allusion to that 'beauteous Dread' whose presence haunted every poet of the day, and whose prolonged single state, in spite of every contrary rumour and every temptation that could address the heart of woman, was at once the wonder and the pride of her people. You might have challenged the extravagance of the public taste —you might have scorned its frivolity—you might have cried pooh, pooh! to Sir Plume—yet, if you had been honest, you would have soon admitted there is mettle in that lad for all his boyishness, like his who sailed for the North-West passage, or his who joined in the mad gallantry of one of the desperate attempts to free the Catholics' Queen, Mary, or his who, in the pains of the death-wound at Zutphen, 'with a chearful and smiling countenance put forth his hand and slappt' 'Good Master Gifford' 'softlie on the cheeks, and not long after he lift up his eyes and hands uttering these words— 'I would not change my joy for the empire of the world;'' ay, and there is mind there also, for the

quaint, inverted rhymes which Dick gets to deliver he expresses with excellent elocution. The universal speechifying and verse-making of the period led to very laughable exposures and defeats of stilted and stumbling notabilities — but these must have been, on the whole, exceptions — practice here, as elsewhere, must have led to some approach to perfection; and certes, our Dick acquitted himself like a gentleman-player with a dash of swagger, but likewise with the impressive readiness, point, and spirit of a quick-witted and cultivated man.

His short address ended, he shrouded his grandeur in the sight of the spectators, by wrapping round him the sombre russet cloak, which indicated and befitted him who had done the deed—

> Whereof great shame shall grow,

who now, as a fugitive and outlaw,

> Must to the greenwood go,
> Alone a banished man,

And stepping back a pace, he stood in silent and still expectancy, until another chamber door behind him opened, and all necks below were outstretched, as a female figure, with quick steps of real or assumed agitation, joined him; while Master Yorke raised his wand, pointed to the scroll running along the wall, and said, with a good roll of the voice—

'Here cometh Honest Truth, and beginneth the combat.'

Honest Truth was but a beauteous, blushing girl,

to wit, Cicely—very lovely in her dress of studied state, to mark her exalted station, and the strength of the condescension and loyalty with which she clung to 'the banished man.' Yet poor Cicely had been guilty of no thoughtless waste, or base prodigality in her apparel. Many suits, astounding in their richness and value, enjoyed the same advantage—they were worn of a constancy, and for a perpetuity; they were inheritances and heir-looms. Petrarch's Laura had but her two. Who has not heard of the crimson with the grey feathers, and the green with the violets? And could she have had better? Is there not gross impolicy, as well as lavishness, in weakening a vivid picture by ever changing its surroundings? Speak of monotony! Call it, rather, unity, which is the delight of delights. Who wearies of nature's fidelity in the tender green of spring, the golden yellow of harvest, the silver whiteness of winter?

Cicely wore a costume of most creditable and inexpensive device, whose effect was perfect — her grandmother's scarlet velvet skirt, slightly lengthened, but tucked up at one side to show her brown silk hose with tassels, and her wilicoate of quilted white taffetie; a boddice of the same, and over it her own charming little cloak, not unlike a modern garment, with jelly-bag sleeves, and trimmed round with fine Poland fur—old, but in respect to which Mistress Cicely was not so far before other maidens in discretion, but that in its appropriation she broke

a statute of the realm; on her head a very dainty black velvet hat, braided and looped with gold, and depending from the back one of those veils of priceless lace, which women of rank succeed to somehow, and hand down through generations. And Cicely's masked dress cost her but a week's study, and a rose noble.

Always sensitive, Cicely faced an audience with evident trepidation which threatened to break down into the horrors of hysterical tears, or giggling; but the awful imposition of the manners of the day put iron barriers on the girlish weakness, and corresponding with her sensitiveness the girl's enthusiasm was such, that the moment she uttered, in a tremulous tone—that, fortunately, was quite appropriate, the words—

> Oh, Lord, what is this world's bliss,
> That changeth as the moon!
> My summer's day, in lusty May,
> Is darked before the noon,

she did what she had felt she must do—forgot her own identity, the hall of Barne-elms, her father and the company there, her gay cousin Dick the courtier, standing opposite her, and lived and breathed the Not-browne Mayde, who 'loved none' but him who was about to bid her a long and last farewell.

Cicely was unlike Dick; she had no use or wont to rely upon, she was entirely inexperienced and inexpert in this game, but she had what was far higher —fine natural talent. She was a growing woman—

of imagination and enthusiasm. She had, in a degree at least, the peculiar gift of native, latent eloquence of face, voice, and gesture. Had time, station, principles, temper willed, she might have been half a century's rage as an actress. As it was, ere she came to declare—

> Sith it is so, that ye will go,
> I will not live behind;
> Shall never be said, the Not-browne Mayde
> Was to her love unkind,

she startled herself and others. Dick raised his eyebrows in admiration; Master Yorke rubbed his hands in exulting self-congratulation.

'Passion on me!' exclaimed Sir Hugolin, hoarsely, staring blankly, 'doth the wench speak in earnest?'

'Marry! what a fine woman my little Cissy hath grown!' protested kind Mistress Hancock. 'But why she should make me cry, I cannot tell, no more than a baby; sure it is Ciss, and no other, and no misfortune hath befallen her. Children, keep quiet, like pretty dears, and you shall have plum-porridge from your grannum to breakfast to-morrow.'

Dr. Dorset—a bland placeman, who only countenanced the play in compliment to his friend Master Yorke, from whose guilelessness he borrowed, in honour, some manuscripts and much curious information—nursed his trussed hose, as gentlemen afterwards nursed their silk stockings, and prepared to smile throughout, whether smiles or tears were in

season; and Mistresses Maude and Jane drew up their long necks, used their feather fans, and looked supercilious; they did not understand this sudden spring of fancy and feeling any more than their politic, worldly father. These were fierce, haughty women, capable of strong good or evil, solid love or hate—not without good in them, but far from complaisant in ordinary circumstances—disagreeable to an extent that would not be tolerated in a smooth age. Nan feared the Dorsets, and Cicely disliked them; and, characteristically, Cicely was most the favourite, or, rather, least the aversion. Goody Grizel was all in a tremble of enchantment, and unable to resist holding up her hands with a quivering motion, one of them clutching the basting spoon, and saying softly, 'Dear heart! such a clever young mistress! Wait till you see her in her rail, among the toads, the innocent! Plague take my tongue! Gil, I forgot I was not to let on'—at the risk of destroying the capon and the muscadine, the leveret, and all the galimafrée of the supper; while Gil imperturbably unfurled the screen, and left the company to study for a space the merits of the hero-loving, large-hearted Queen, and her open-handed, wit-breathing, deep-pondering host.

Save Master Hancock, who, after a hard day's birding, was, it must be granted, already nodding on his corner of a bench, there is but the clerk of Cambridge unmentioned in the catalogued sentiments of the chief of the party, and all

that can be said of him was, that the drooping, absent eyes, raised coolly at the commencement, became, unknown to his neighbours, fixed by that apparition in a strange, magical way, so that when Solomon and the Queen of Sheba intervened between him and the object of his scrutiny, they, too, fell mechanically.

In the mask at Barne-elms there was no time for the drinking, dicing, and loud talking of the regular theatres, because for one reason there was the desirable distinction of no waiting—Dick keeping his ground for the whole course of the ballad, and there requiring but the opening and closing of a chamber door, and the substitution of Nan for Cicely, in order that the drama should proceed post haste.

Nan played 'High Courage,' but singularly, whether from a want of presence of mind, a deficiency in the conception which threw Cicely into her characters—notwithstanding greater propriety of casting and other qualifications, Nan's performance needed all Dick's support to carry it off. She looked a sufficiently captivating Diana in her slashed riding-coat, her white buskins, and in her hand 'a bow ready to draw,' but her speeches stuck in her throat, and she delivered her promise,

> To come on foot, to hunt and shoot,
> To get us meat in store;
> For so that I your company
> May have, I ask no more,

with such incongruous reluctance, that Cicely, panting and half crying, as inconsequently as Mistress Hancock or Goody Grizel, the moment she got behind the half open door, was tickled, and could not choose but laugh at Nan's timidity and blundering, while she hurriedly changed her dress. 'I vow Dick was right,' she said to herself. 'Poor Nanny! for as gamesome as she is, Shell-ears may steal a march upon Diamond-tongue. I'd as lief she had been the best, but she is not bad enough to grieve over.'

'How dared the girl appear with a half-conned task!' observed the Mistresses Dorset, almost aloud; 'she should be whipped for her negligence.' But the rest of the hall were more indulgent to romping Nan's distressed youth and beauty, and Dick was far too condescending for the stony-hearted outlaw, and the more attentive he showed himself, the more he bent his head and his laughing eye, the more Nan backed, and choked upon her words, and cast her head impatiently; and the dark figure and the ponderous brow in the centre of the brilliant circle in the body of the hall moved restlessly, as if weary of this manœuvre and demanding the next.

There was a longer pause between the removal of the tapestry before the third act. Gil disappeared bodily behind the veil, and sundry flittings to and fro, conveying of burdens, and disposal of new features in the scene, could be detected, along with the whispered discourse of the serving-man and outlaw who must have exerted himself in the transformation.

The giant eastern shades rolled back, and a great sensation was produced; the gallery was still a gallery within an inhabited hall, but it was carpeted with moss; the wall beyond was hidden by a few stately branches of lush trees—a miniature Birnam; hides were hung on them, and a hunting-horn and buck-knife; two deep-chested fine stag-hounds of Master Hancock's were stalking up and down; Dick was reclining in his russet cloak by a fire blazing in a brazier, at once indicating it was night, and throwing over the whole narrow space a delusive light. Those who were nearest the gallery could descry that even huge, overgrown toadstools, black hellebore, deadly nightshade, and hemlock had been planted, to render the glade unpropitious and repulsive; while true newt leapt up in dismay, and a caged owl, suddenly brought out of darkness, flapped its wings and hooted ominously.

'O Lord, Lord, how dismal! Let us have something polite and sprightly,' cries Mistress Hancock.

'By cock and pie, I hate what is melancholic,' grumbles Sir Hugolin.

'Silence all!' orders Master Yorke, more punctilious for his drama than his guests' humours.

'See now the entrance of Perfect Patience, which a holy apostle did commend.'

Then Cicely entered, bearing her pillow and plaid, like one who prepares her couch, and is already habited for the night. Her dress was one of those nightrails which, in place of being worn in privacy—

at a cost of forty pounds a piece, were sported by the city madams, and 'might be seen with envy of their visitants.' It was neither more nor less than a loose cambric frock, with worked sleeves and collar, and close cambric coif with a tight forehead cloth. In this funereal garment Cicely walked forward intent and resolute. Like most excitable temperaments, she had a horror of those rank, poisonous plants, and slimy or dusky animals, but she was not young Cicely Yorke now, she was the Not-browne Mayde rejoicing in tribulation for the sake of her wonderful love. She advanced fearlessly, while he would warn her back with the doubt—

> Ye could not sustain
> The thorny ways, the deep vallèys,
> The snow, the frost, the rain,
> The cold, the heat; for dry or weet,
> We must lodge on the plain,
> And us above, none other roof
> But a brake bush or twain.

Wan and wobegone in her humiliation, but with a thrill of steadfastness that ran through the hearts, she protested—

> Yet I am sure of one pleasùre,
> And shortly it is this,
> That where ye be, me seemeth, pardie,
> I could not fare amiss.

In her shrouding weeds Cicely's beauty looked out with classic, passionate, irresistible force. There was a hush through the little assembly; the Mistresses Dorset forgot to sneer, their father to smile, Sir

Hugolin was subdued, Mistress Hancock was quiet and trembling, Dick, though his cousin Cicely was certainly not his mistress, whispered desperately, 'Don't make a fool of me, Ciss,' and on the palest face there, a dark red flush rose to the forehead, and a short hard breathing afforded momentary relief from a burden and anguish of interest.

The succeeding act appeared a mere by-play, one of Master Yorke's beloved Choruses, so languid and artificial was it after the reality of the last, yet Nan's accomplishment of her aim was more creditable than at first. She sat at the table beneath the leaves and boughs, and ate and drank industriously of the 'good vittail,' the wild deer, 'where is so great plentie,' and 'water clear of the river,' that was 'full sweet,' although it replaced all 'beer, ale, or wine,' as a type of 'Merrie frugalitie.' Notwithstanding, there was discontent buttoned in her square collar, and pettishness knitted in her girdle. Poor Nan! she had so coveted this pastime, and some evil spirit had entered into it and poisoned it. Dick the courtier, from being sympathetic, began to crow arrogantly and maliciously, and Nan was sick with spleen—and who or what could be to blame, unless there were more spells than one at work in that old hall?

There was an unpremeditated, eager shuffle of feet when Cicely again took Nan's place, and with the daylight restored, and her walking garb resumed—and such a homely garb—her raven hair as it seemed shortened close by her delicate ears, after the fashion

of a boy, her grass-green kirtle to the knee, her bow in her hand,

To shoot in time of need,

so metamorphosed, that in her sighs she was impelled to the touching allusion,

Oh, my sweet mother, before all other,
For you I have most dread.

But full maidenly, yea, more maidenly than she had ever yet appeared, as 'Fond Fidelitie' suing still in his fancied misfortunes that stern, unconscionable man, brooking his cruel despite that she was 'light o' love,' that like as she had sworn to him, she would answer 'whoever it were'—

In way of companie,
It is said of old, soon hot, soon cold,
So is a woman.

Truly womanly, under these circumstances, her half-humble, half-proud, all piteous reminder—

If ye take heed, it is no need
Such words to say by me;
For oft ye prayed, and me assayed,
Ere I loved you, pardie:
And though that I, of ancestrie,
A baron's daughter be,
Yet have I proved how I you loved,
A squire of low degree.

Then followed his base pretence:—

A baron's child to be beguiled,
It were a cursed deed!
To be fellàw with an outlaw
Almighty God forbid!

And her despairing cry:—

Whatever befall, I never shall,
Of this thing you upbraid;
But if ye go, and leave me so,
Then have ye me betrayed.
Remember weel, how that you deal;
For if ye, as ye said,
Be so unkind to leave behind
Your love, the Not-browne Mayde,
Trust me truly that I shall die
Soon after ye be gone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind,
I love but you alone.

As Cicely thus adjured Dick, there was a stir among her listeners, one of the number had leant forward hastily, and covered his face with his hands, as if his brain swam.

In the last scene both sisters were disclosed on the stage with Dick, for another and passive personage, by the insatiate lover's last, bitterest, nigh brutal stratagem, is introduced into his plea of rejection.

At a little distance from the principals Nan stood mute and motionless—a statue-like representative of the fairer and better-loved maid whom he professed to have 'purveyed' him in the forest, with whom his first love would well be wroth, and as

It were mine ease, to live in peace;

he would have none of his earlier choice. This was the most trying position of all; here perseverance was frailty, and importunity dishonour—it was love run riot, and tending to the destruction of itself and

all that was 'lovely and of good report.' Yet, although it was Cicely who was now divided and distracted in her representation, her very creeping abhorrence of this last unfair test struggling with the abandonment of her devotion, rendered the poet's thought and the sentence 'unworthy indignitie' more fully than their authors dreamt.

In the yellow say mantle of the forsaken, with the claret-coloured sops and wine, and the fleur-de-luce in her hair as a coronal and clasped as a nosegay in her wrung hands, she suffered herself to give the pledge:—

> And she shall find me soft and kind,
> And courteous every hour;
> Glad to fulfil all that she will
> Command me to my power.

'Troth, a rare wench!' ejaculated Sir Hugolin, smacking his lips.

'Shame upon the mean, craven Bonnibell,' cried the Mistresses Dorset, furiously; 'we endured her lavender-laid clothes, but faugh at her whining hypocrisy.'

There was a clashing accompaniment to their comments from the middle of the room, as it were one of those rapiers which gentlemen walked abroad with of nights, drawn loudly from its sheath, and the sheath flung down by a maddened hand. All looked around, but none acknowledged the impulse. The conclusion ought to have been plain sailing. Dick had but to throw off his russet cloak, and with it his

disdain, and come forth anew in his bravery and graciousness, confessing—

Mine own dear love, I see thee prove,
That ye be kind and true;
Of maid and wife, in all my life,
The best that ever I knew.
Be merry and glad; no more be sad;
The case is changed now,
For it were ruth, that for your truth,
Ye should have cause to rue.

And when the Not-browne Mayde, incredulous and weary, unable at once to receive his feint and her deliverance, should have cut him to the heart by her remonstrance—

Ye shape some wile me to beguile,
And steal from me, I ween;

when he pressed forward in the triumph that was not altogether manly and flawless—

Ye shall not need further to dread;
I will not disparàge
You (God defend!) sith ye descend
Of so great a lineàge.
Now, understand, to Westmoreland,
Which is mine heritage,
I will you bring, and with a ring,
By way of marriàge,
I will you take, and lady make,
As shortly as I can:
Thus have you won an earl's son,
And not a banished man;

as if to save Master Yorke from vain glorification by dashing the cup from his lips, and to instance that disappointments may be met with at the last mo-

ment, a crick occurred in the whilome flowing ceremonial—a sudden confusion among the performers, and Dick to be the defaulter! the first player, prompter, scene-shifter, manager, to be short in his bargain!

It was a fact that Dick executed the winding-up hollowly and foolishly—in his obliviousness took the hand of Nan, the second love, instead of that of the true Not-browne Mayde, and had to be shaken off roughly, and pushed back sullenly, ere he recovered himself—thus reducing actors and company to distraughtness, damaging the climax of the conceit, and overturning the final righteousness of ballad and mask.

The worst of it was that no man could tell to this day whether Dick's inopportune slip and fall proceeded from a momentary lapse of memory and attention which might be the misfortune of the best intentioned and the most honest, or was an escape of Dick's court impudency and wickedness, which was possible, though the lad had his fair points—never deny it.

'Uds daggers! what's the mess?' 'Fine scholarship and manners corresponding!' 'Heyday! has the conclusion changed—aint he worrying the wrong lass?' 'Bide a bit till the mistress sets 'em right, and he wont worry Mistress Nan no longer.'

Master Yorke was in consternation, but he vindicated his claim to fame by crushing the satire in its

bud, and condemning the players to digest their misbehaviour, and agree among themselves as they best could—at leisure. Rising nimbly, and waving his wand as a call for silence, and a herald to his enunciation of the epilogue, he said, 'Gentles and good folks, here endeth 'The Excellent Triumph of Lowlie Meekness over Unparalleled Audacity and Subtile Strategie,' whereof your opinion is now humbly requested.'

With one exception the entertainment had been notably successful, and abundantly warranted the listeners and lookers-on response to Master Yorke's appeal, the gurly huzzas of Sir Hugolin, the hearty good wishes of the Hancocks, the chary bows and becks, and single, ample smile of the Dorsets, the clapping of hands of Grizel, and tossing of caps of the retainers.

In the midst of the clamour one of his guests approached the flattered host, and begged in great disorder to be excused from the subsequent banquet. He was indisposed, he said briefly and hotly, and must return to Cambridge. Verily the man's colour was broken, strained, and fugitive, his eye glittering, his hand shaking. It might be the quotidian ague breaking out again. Since he absolutely declined to lodge at Barne-elms, Master Yorke was compelled to dismiss his friend with much concern, Dr. Dorset looking down on the new-made Fellow from the altitude of his old mastership with a dimmed, flagging affability, and the mistresses, his daughters,

pretending to be clean oblivious of the scholar in one of their own colleges; yet they had heard of him, questioned their father, taken sharp admeasurement of his abilities and attainments, and valued him for them in their own harsh, arrogant way.

But. Cicely having settled differences with Dick and Nan—descending from her eminence, giddy and shamefaced, to beg her friends' pardon, parry the rancour of the Dorsets, kiss Mistress Hancock, and be soundly saluted by her goodman, and shun Sir Hugolin—no longer the impassioned Not-browne Mayde—but blushing, smiling, thoughtful, humorous young Cicely Yorke—tripping along, Cicely caught the sight, winced nervously, and grew for a moment as white and red, red and white, as the leave-taker.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RENCONTRE.

IN the prostrate and waste chase of Barne-elms a few spots retained traces of original careful cultivation and elaborate design. One was an artificial elevation, about a hundred yards from the house, rising fair and round, a specimen of 'those mounts, 'operet opiario,' writhen about with degrees, like turnings of a cockle-shell, to come to top without pain,' commanding a view of 'the lazy loiterer,' the Ouse, a silver thread in the distance, and the nearer, broader riband—the Cam, which a son and partisan was doomed to depreciate in the reference,

> What nearer muse can bide
> To sit and sing by Granta's naked side;
> Nought have we here but willow-shaded shore
> To tell our Grant his banks are left forlore;

the wide, windy flats of the fens, the chimneys of Denny Abbey, once committed to the ghostly counsels of the brothers of Pembroke, and the

proud towers and spires of Cambridge. The height was of a pyramidal form, of turf originally closely shaven, with a narrow, terraced green footpath winding round and round in a gradual ascent to the summit, giving it the air of a fortification, or one of those castles of pastry, with which John Smithson, the royal cook, adorned the palace-table at Christmas. At the base there was a screen of dark holly-bushes and gnarled crab-apples running along, and forming a sheltered alley; and from the top, if the observer remarked the land-marks closely, he would decipher, even by the stumps and shattered relics of trees on which cattle had browsed and sheep rubbed, that these had been planted in cross avenues with relation to this hillock, so that, standing at this point, one surveyed the limbs of a St. George's cross running in lanes of verdure at angles on every side. The trees were cut down or largely demolished, the grass was overgrown, or cropped in bare patches—but the holly-bushes and wild-apples remained in luxuriance, affording protection and seclusion at all seasons; and from the mount the watcher still looked abroad on a wide, peculiar, and, to those who were born to it, a suggestive, and not unattractive landscape. There lay the grey fens, with the reclaimed tracts vividly green, and the lakelets where pike, perch, trout, and gudgeon, but mostly eels abounded, like patches of snow on their surface. An alderman of Cambridge in Parliament had once compared these morasses to 'a crust of bread swim-

ming in a dish of water,' because, under eight or ten feet of earth, nothing was to be found but water, water. Men had feared to attempt their drainage, lest they should revert to their 'dropsy,' after the example of the Pontine Marshes. When the undertaking had been partly accomplished, a celebrated preacher addressed the judges at the assizes on the text, 'Let judgment run down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream,' (Amos v. 24), in the patriotic fear that, once drained, the fens would be inclosed, and fall to private proprietors. In the meantime several hundreds, if they had ceased to be thousands, supported themselves by fishing, fowling, serge and turf-cutting; and scores of these sportsmen or purveyors kept the moss alive, picking their way, following their trail, and pursuing their business on their difficult and sometimes dangerous ground. Violent disputes and serious frays had arisen on this debateable field of trade; and earnest had been taken of it as a common good by fugitives and criminals escaping from justice—water-hens and herons had often been driven from their fastnesses.

The fens were storied like the Scotch moors and hillsides. Away yonder to the right, Allan de Wynne and his merry men had lurked for months; to the left, by the hidden well, the governor's falconer discovered the dead body of the goodly child, in the rich mantle embroidered with an earl's arms. There had been a supposition that a drought had been occasioned by the partial drying up of these

sloughs—'a jejune conceit,' as their historian reflects, but enough heed was lent to the fable to have cited in their favour that Athens and Pisa were both in fenny situations, and that it was conceived that 'the grossness of the air quickened the wits.'

So sat Cicely Yorke, many days after the celebration of the mask, knitting her Flanders hose, and picking up and letting down many a mesh of memory and reason.

Now, Barne-elms stood treeless and dilapidated right below—the old house was, indeed, fallen in fortunes, scarcely decent habitation for the poorest of franklins.

It had not even an 'upper chamber' projecting over the lower story, and 'from its superior size and lightsomeness,' the guest room of the house. It was brown and bleak every way; the heavy beams were crumbling, the lattice windows were shrinking and retreating in the depth of the wall, or starting into still more unsightly bulges; the fair ornaments of coat-of-arms, porch, great bell to jowl, and neighbouring garden with fountains and statues, some of which Master Yorke had himself brought from Italy at improvident expense, were fast dwindling away.

In the same manner the spring and summer were past, the sprinkling of verdure lingering in the old park was sere and yellow; the holly-bushes, indeed, were still erect and crisp in their sheen, but the poor crabs were mournfully shedding their brown, sapless leaves, as one loses friends, and were not

compensated by their wealth of hard, sour green fruit for their broad foliage, and far-fluttering white blossoms. So Cicely, in her murry-coloured habit, bordered with black lamb, her round cap, and linen screed hanging down her back, without ouch or aglet, feather or veil, was a different madam from the squire's young daughter, in the holiday finery of her ancestral wardrobe, and the fire of her genius kindled and kept up by the instinctive sway she owned over others. But just as the old house preserved an unmistakeable air of gentle fellowship, and the confluence of humble and high entertainment in its utmost descent—just as an anticipative mind could look forward to those strong ungenial crabs—a rich brown, bobbing up and down, and causing the amber ale—the lamb's-wool, to froth and spit in tankard and porringer held by stout fists, and emptied with lusty glee to 'Queen Bess, God bless her, and aroint her enemies'—to the good Protestant cause, and the great Earl of Leicester—to the brave admirals on the stormy high seas—to the poor Pierce Pennilesses, whose wild wits shook the sides of others, though they could not line their own doublets — or, if that was against the grain, to godly Master Dyer himself, though he would not assent to healths and toasts, and his last long homily; when the free fuel was piled up on the hearths, when the women bent over their frames and their wheels, and the men rested and feasted after the toil and cold of the winter's day; when the snow lay heavy on stone

and thatch roofs, and the sportsman's scent was gone, and the carts had been dragged floundering from the snow-wreaths in the deep lanes hard by—just thus Cicely, through the slight disguise of her plain, quaint dress, and her homely occupation, gleamed forth with her noble, telling beauty, and the brooding slumber of her high heart and spirit prophesying a suitable future, though its colours were of the bronzed darkness of some of the masters' pictures—the deep, rich hues of sorrow and trial.

In the idleness of a disengaged mind, Cicely at intervals looked up and down, here and there, like an imprisoned princess seeking a deliverer. For a long time she descried only their own heads of cattle and sheep, and a wild swan sailing by from the fens, and making the rush of the air produced by its great wings felt even where she sat. At last she espied a figure wending up one of the despoiled alleys, in the direction of the Mount of Grace—so termed, time out of mind, from forgotten premises. This might be some paladin, or peer, or sorcerer, or helpless, meaningless enemy, the more fatal because he crossed their destiny under the stars, and from no motive or power against which they could be forewarned and forearmed—to act on their obscure fortunes, and bring stir and tumult, ecstasy and anguish into their tranquil lives. And Cicely, from the sagacity and sense which so often corrects and balances in healthy proportion the excess of a lively, restless imagina-

tion, quite seeing the improbability of these results, continued to watch the wayfarer with the curiosity which fools call frivolity, and wise men intelligence.

Half demure—for it was a prim, rest assured, as well as a passionate time; half arch—for it was a young girl who experienced it; with a spice of keenness resulting from their lonely habits—a pretty thing to see lurking under the long ivory lids, the lilies of the brown face, and peeping out of the corners of the full hazel eyes, and hovering about the partly-open red lips, and the half bow of the white teeth, and stiffening the long throat until the band of the beaver hung straight and still, so that she might see without obviously poking her head out towards the new-comer.

Who could he be? A Sir Lancelot, or Sir Galahad, or Sir Bevis of knight-errantry, of whom the Puritan maiden had read in the monks' romances? Tush, no! Ralph de Kamois was the last bold cavalier who kept riotous tilting within very stone's-throw of the University; and Ralph de Kamois lay in the fens before he paid his heavy fine and made his submission to the Earls of Cornwall, Leicester, and Norfolk. They had none but country bumpkins left, unless when the Assizes sat, or the Court visited Cambridge; and then, as Cicely had decided, the judges and the gallants loved the tinkle of gold coins, the rustle of parchment deeds, and wine and wassail such as their exhausted housekeeping never presented. Even Dick, their near

kinsman, sometimes talked in a mercenary style of goods and gains, until Nan, who had been laughing all sentiment to scorn the moment before, looked chill and white, while she persisted in applauding and seconding his carnal ambition; and, verily, Master Dyer looked grave, and spoke sadly and sternly of 'the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life,' and the awful judgment. Then Dick answered flippantly and profanely, Master Dyer alleged blasphemously; and her father struck in and rebuked Dick for the lowness and sorriness of his ends, and the vileness of the crowded ways by which he would reach them; and Dick turned on his heel; and Nan's laugh sounded shrill and piercing; and Cicely sped apart to droop her head pitifully, she could scarcely tell wherefore, for it was but the jarring contention of a vain and peevish argument.

No Lancelot—it might be a messenger from the Hancocks, but their Miles rode the roan; it was not any of the wild Irishmen of Sir Hugolin—this figure had not their running gait whose swiftness at a stretch outstripped a horse's speed, and its garments were less spare than the gallowglasses', 'bare-headed, their locks hanging on their shoulders, yellow surplices dyed with saffron, short coats and strange jackets, which caused as much staring and gaping as if they had come from China and America,' and carrying in individual instances the badge of servitude on the breast, offering some

such inscription as 'Black Ulick — Sir Hugolin Botelier, of Rackheath — his runner.' Cicely had been accustomed to regard these poor savages with even more fascination and fear than the refuse of disbanded soldiers and discarded retainers — the 'Common Cursitors,' or vagabonds; the 'Rufflers,' or sturdy beggars; the 'Counterfeit Cranks,' who affected sickness; and the still more revolting 'Abraham Men,' who affected madness — all of whom infested the high roads, and foraged from country-houses, to the molestation and dread of their occupants. Heaven be praised it was not the flaming scarlet of Sir Hugolin's huge presumptuous person, whose privileged approach was like to be the most loathed of all. Fie! it was but the clerk of Cambridge, in his crow's plumes, proceeding to the house, unaware that Master Yorke was from home. There was little danger that Master Lee would trespass upon Cicely's retirement; but, lest in his absence of mind and brain sickness he should stumble down the path to the Mount, in place of pursuing the broad road to the house, Cicely took thought, and commenced a song. Inadvertently she started none of her harvest hymns or psalms, but one of the worldly ditties of the day which had reached Barne-elms—'Fortune my Foe'—just to warn him of the existence and presence of that scholar's enemy—a woman.

Oh! mischief finding a covert in that good, wise little country girl's heart.

Cicely knitted sedulously, and did not look up while she executed her song. When she finished, she was startled, rather scared, to find that the first sweet notes had arrested the traveller, and there he stood, like one of the stone figures in the pleasance, until the conclusion; and then, in place of going on, he diverged from his course, and came straight towards her.

'Plague take the man!' Nay, that was a profane expression, and she should be very far from wishing the return of the pest which her father and Gil had once faced in Almaigne; but, peradventure, the man was a rogue or a fool, after his demonstrations, to trouble himself thus to pain her. Nay, his gait was not reassuring; he came on with broken, hesitating steps, as one might expect from a man of feeble or blameable purpose; and once he stopped altogether, with the air of a person who prepares to turn about and to retrace his steps. Cicely did feel a twinge of repentance for the rashness which had led her to expose herself, and a rush of embarrassment and resentment at having her stronghold invaded by an unpropitious, unwarranted foot; but she collected all her faculties — and what rapid flights women's reflections do make—to receive him with the dignity which was due to herself, and which not even the reserved student should venture to underrate. Ah! but the student was not dignified; he panted with fatigue, drops of moisture stood on his broad forehead, he almost reeled as, removing his cap and

bowing low, he got out, 'I crave the honour to greet Mistress Cicely Yorke.'

A fico for the man! was he beside himself? Had the northern and southern students once more engaged in bloody brawls? Had he committed manslaughter, or set his college on fire? Had the fate of 'Duns Scotus,' in whose time the Cambridge clerks went in open day armed with swords and bows, reached Master Lee? Was he fasting and studying until he should be found a dead skeleton fallen on his translation of the Scriptures; or, adopting the practice of Dr. Copcot, master of St. Bennet's, was he to survive in such a state of maceration, that a foreign scholar like Drusius should send him a letter (whether in commendation or censure) subscribed 'Manibus Johannis Copcot,' 'to the ghost of John Copcot,' in which piteous circumstances to have doings with him might expose the unwary to the sentence, 'He that falls heavy on a ghost or shadow will, in fine, give the greatest blow and bruise unto himself.' Or was it a bodily distemper similar to the plague, from the unclean streets, of which it was remarked 'that the purest brains were the soonest subject to infection;' and attacking at once the brain, one of the citadels of life, men went raving mad under it, and so starved themselves to death.

Oh, that Nan would perversely keep within doors this day of all days, or run at random without, thus trying these poor bodies and souls; and oh, that

Cicely would be so womanly cruel, stabbing him and transfixing him with her sweet coldness, her quiet composure.

Lee was ill in spirit. There were giants in Elizabeth's reign; and there were strong men so hampered and shackled by their own hands, so entangled, spell-bound, and weakened by the sophistry of schools—that their heads were light, their feet unsteady, their hearts heavy, and cold or deadly sick within them.

'The icebergs are strong, but God is stronger,' said Martin Frobisher's brave crew, and they sailed on like men, and mastered nature. 'The Queen's Grace,' faltered the brow-beaten bishops, who deferred to Elizabeth's interpretation of Lutheranism, and cowered not so much before the fiery Tudor's anger, as in the shadow of the pillar of royalty which they had themselves reared. 'The grand arcanum, the elixir vitæ, the blessed crystal, the wonderful drug!' muttered the weird alchemist, and he flung his whole treasure, to his bones and blood, into his furnace fire. 'The ancient University—its sage statutes, its precious libraries, its cool cells,' sighed the stud entabsorbed in his capricio, and surrendered home, hearth, and heart to its fetters.

Trembling and craven like a sinful man, with his conscience smiting him for an unnamed, unsounded transgression, Lee the Fellow allowed himself to be attracted by the girl's fascinations, received with a secret groan her curtsey on the misnamed Mount of

Grace, listened to her ceremonious apologies for the absence of Master Yorke, waved off her coy assumption of the hostess's duties and proffer to escort him to the house, and set before him the glass of sack, or balm wine, if he preferred it, the pheasant's wing, or the slice of Cheshire cheese, with the snowy manchet to keep his stomach, or his return to the town, saw her seat herself again on the turf, and threw himself beside her—a traitor.

The day was sharp, but mellow with the breath of dropped, bruised, mowed vegetation hanging on its keenness. The battle of the summer was fought, and the very mid-world of the clouds and zephyrs was full of the sap and essence of the vanquished. Nevertheless, it was a heartsome day, full of the human interest of the late harvest, rising, broadening, and setting on the changeless fens, and the Cam, with its occasional freight, its lonely houses and little hamlets, culminating in the great university town.

Lee remained there, looking down on Cicely Yorke's lithe, deft hands, fair as Elizabeth's. What wonders these little hands effected from the cradle to the grave! What fine yet familiar, delicate yet enduring household marvels—the baby's posset and its swaddling-bands; the strong man's cambric shirts and lace bands to ruffle in; the refreshing brewis, and spiced meat, and toasted buns, to cheer his heart, and the softest pillow for his uneasy head; the cloak, and the cowl, and the night-draught for the hoary chill of age; the great

basket in the hall piled up with broken meat for the poor; and for all, the fairy music on the lute or virginals, to cheat the earthly wights with a belief in angels' presence.

The wind played with the frounced, double-curled dark hair escaping from beaver and caul—silken, wandering locks—such as were twisted round fond fingers, clutched by infant hands, laid sometimes in extravagant folly on throbbing hearts to still their burning pain, worn once on knightly crests, as were the red dragon, the white greyhound, and the white lion—their bold owner's badge and guerdon, I wot as worthy as the others.

The head was bent pondering over its task—a slight but shapely head—a head that could not bristle with innumerable saws, or droop with ponderous logic, but a head that could be careful as well as captious, considerate as well as cross—a head that could compare, contrast, collate with mingled subtlety and frankness, and lay itself faithfully on the block as any man's bull-necked caput—nay, with a meek grace, which was unknown to the stubborn, rebellious brother.

Ah! fool, what had he to do with her excellences, her wit, or her tenderness and truth—'only a woman's,' like that lock of hair which might have cost a dean his preferment.

Master Lee and Mistress Cicely talked brokenly (better they had been capering with Nan, helping Goody Grizel to turn and restore to durance a re-

fractory goose already tied up for fattening), of the weather, the approaching brewing of October, and slaughter of oxen and sheep, with spinning of wool and manufacture of candles for winter consumption, of which he knew nothing, and with a touch at her father's studies, of which she had just a tinge, while he was completely at sea as to her amount of book knowledge. Something she said of 'Toxophilus,' erroneous as women's arguments often are, but betraying the instinctive penetration that searches into secret causes, and paves the way for profounder suggestions and juster conclusions. He started as if 'a babe and suckling' had spoken 'truth;' he looked at her with a sparkle of pleased apprehension and amusement in his grave, dark eyes, already hollow in their sockets; and little did he dream, as he did so, that the stray guesser, the advocate distressed by, yet unable to shake off her own partialities, the faulty calculator, the half despotic, half temporizing lawgiver, was as much beyond him in plain sense, humble endurance, nice tact, mild mercy, and fresh cheerfulness, as he was above her in powers of conception, in faculties of reason, in closeness and hardness of application, in austerity of uprightness.

Something either the one or the other said of Master Dyer and his life of joint learning and labour, his frugal household, which he maintained on an herb garden and collections of the smallest of tokens, his many children, whom he dressed and nursed, that his good wife might prosecute the lace-

weaving, and taught, that he might not have the shame of sending forth ignoramuses into the world, that they, his descendants, might be distinguished from the gross but kindly yeomen and peasants, that they might address another Languet in choice Latin, and wrestle in polemics with Erastians and Arminians, and live to lead the same spare, studious, pious, and toilsome lives as their father before them.

Suddenly Lee found himself talking fluently and eagerly of a parsonage and its lowly but honourable roof, the high calling of its owner, the peace of his life, the liberty for reading and reflection, the simplicity and ease of its bright fireside in the winter, and shady ivy-grown porch in the summer—the strength of its holy affections. He was not a deceiver, yet what knew he of the curate's gains and pains, his furrows to be more anxiously watched than another's, his clouted shoes, his home-spun coat, his crafts of bee-keeping, lavender-raising, fruit-drying, almanac-copying, nostrum-writing, even tailoring and cordwaining, to help out his income—with the brief but able sermon read once a week with a heavy heart to gaping rustics, where the Book was chained to the desk, the rite of baptism given to the dying infants of squatters in the pound, and the burial-service pronounced in rain, sleet, and snow, at the grey, ghostly dawn, and in the dark louring twilight over grim white Nabals who had kept up the dear grain from starving families, or

black, swollen corpses from which souls still more fallen and foul had parted in the clamour and rage of conflict.

The warmer Lee waxed, Cicely waned shyer and colder, gecked at his praises, and uttered exceptions to Episcopacy which drew so near Puritanism at that particular period, that it required deep churchmen to dissever them; and Cicely had been brought up in principles of tolerance and charity. This passive opposition and gathering hostility, which depressed and discountenanced Lee in the middle of his harangue, stung him violently in the end. He abruptly and notoriously changed his tone as wrath prevailed, talked bigly of his University, its soaring honours, learned achievements, and precious discoveries; and sneered at his former speech, and atall mean contentment, low usefulness, common dalliance with joy and sorrow. And Cicely assented, with satire in her concord, in her 'Good lack! ye speak well, Master Lee; I saw ye jested a moment agone. Who would preside in his own chimney corner when he could fill a place on a college form? Who would delve the ground and grind the corn to fill hungry mouths if he could read for a degree? What is this poor, troublesome, qualmish body, to the soaring mind? Natheless, it has been thought that the mind will not serve us here, without this varlet of a case —which God made likewise; neither have men's mighty minds risen altogether and alone to heaven, the Lord defend us! according to some, they have

sunk to another place—but that is a vile rumour, I dare to say, Master Lee.'

Lee laughed bitterly, and, with an unmanliness which creeps unawares into the vitals of bookmen, answered her with rudeness, that women were no judges, and ought to stick to their huswifes, and rear their husbands' brats, leaving better things to men; quoting, in evidence of his plain contempt, the work of an imperious, but honest and loving reformer—'The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women,' which was verily addressed to the misgovernment of women in queenly seats, and not to their right of private decision and separate responsibility; and which was answered by a haughty Howard, as Elizabeth reckoned, right pertinently.

The couple had arisen, and began to descend the Mount in dissatisfaction and dispeace, sullenness and ire, when, as they wound round and round — the chase at their feet, the fens far away, she in front, he treading on her heels—Cicely's broad-pointed shoe struck upon the glistening skin of a viper, torpid and quiescent among the long grass fringing the pathway.

Cicely had walked among frogs, and been elevated above their gruesomeness as the Not-browne Mayde, but as Cicely Yorke, discomfited and disparaged, she no sooner perceived the snake, and had a forethought of its venom, than she screamed loudly, sprang aside, and caught her scornful companion's gown.

He stood for a moment as still as a rock; then,

in spite of her cries of 'Good Master Lee, let him alone, and come away; thou wilt be bitten, thou wilt be bitten!' he trampled the reptile underfoot with his heavy boot; and when Cicely still would have fled, he pressed after her—'Be no more fearful, sweet Mistress Cicely, the danger is over; grant me a word, a look, to certify thou art reassured.'

Cicely hung her head, and the red spot blistered Master Lee's cheek, as on the night of the mask; and indeed the whole appearance of the sworn scholar, now as then, was that of a man carried in his mind, and laid hold of by some formidable malady, which on occasions riots properly in those strong, sedate constitutions. If Whitgift, the awful Master of Trinity, had seen him!

Oh, goose! that after the fashion of the Macfarlane brood, would mind your play rather than your meat, which at this time was synonymous with your work; oh, giddy Nan! who would sooner affect any romping office than bear Cicely company in calm, delectable duties; oh, Goody Grizel! who had a weakness for Nan's irregular, teasing, noisy assistance, though it was no furtherance in the long run; oh, bracing autumn winds, and shining Cam river, and ruined but still green pleasance, and brown home—savouring ancient dwelling! oh, quaint song of 'Fortune my Foe!' oh, snake, spawn of the old serpent, ye had all much harm to answer for of another sort than was punished by the hands of Derricke the hangman!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WARNINGS.

'THE hunt was up,' the gentry of Cambridgeshire were abroad—to follow, not a Papist plot, nor an act of Puritan sedition, nor the fooling of a favourite jester like Will Somers, nor a privileged buffoon like Dick Tarleton, with his buttoned cap and his flat nose; nor the juggling tricks of Will Cuckoe; nor the fiddling tunes of Antony Now Now and blind Moone; nor the drum-beating of the bear-gardens; nor the clashing of swords in the jousts—none of all these, but a stag racing over the breaks and fells that were not yet rich pasture and waving corn-fields.

Master Yorke did not care for such a meeting, and would rather have sat at a cloth-covered board any day; but as it was within a round mile, he sent his damsels, Cicely and Nan, on his mare Brown Bess and their pony Rover, under the care of Gil, in his blue serving-coat, walking at their bridle reins, to witness the sport. Sorely the girls sighed that they

were not better mounted and accompanied in order to join in the chase; while they proudly kept aloof from the feathered, gold-laced dames, with sweeping silk-sewed horse-cloths, who stared at them boldly as strange intruders in the flock. A cavalier or two greeted learned Master Yorke's goodly daughters, in their camlet skirts and caps with herons' plumes; a good-natured motherly madam nodded from her fat palfrey—but from the main body of the pleasure-seekers they were sadly apart. Selfishness was at work in the days of Queen Bess as in those of the true-hearted daughter of the German Georges.

Doubtless the young gorges swelled a little at the mean exclusion; but they were blessed with light hearts and stout spirits which carried them over the paltry cross, and furnished them with a mercurial philosophy. The mere spectacle—the Lincoln green, the baldrics, the bugles, the neighing, champing horses, and baying hounds—was sufficient recompence for the early ride that gave full force to the cool air off the dewy stubble; and there were no decaying potatoes, sodden turnips, rotten beans on the way, but tangled brakes and lone dingles, with old thorns, mud-walled or wattled huts, and such a wealth of wild creepers and rank herbs, coneys, stoats, and fitchets about the unwede, untrenched hedges and ditches and banks of streams, fit to make poor naturalists die with envy at the bare recollection.

As straggling riders still formed a string down

the road from Cambridge, a magnificent madam suddenly pricked from a little group, and rode smartly up to the Yorkes where they sat beneath a wayside thicket of ripening hazels and brambles, removed from the throng.

'What do ye here, mistresses,' called the harsh, masculine voice of Mistress Jane Dorset, 'wasting stirrup leather and camlet cloth? Pay heed to your doting father's straits—surquedry and presumption are not for dowerless maids and curtels. Away to your lint thread and your darning-needles, and keep close from wanton eyes.'

Nan, for all her spirit, was speechless with wrath; but Cicely held up her innocent head, and advanced a space, and spoke in their defence very clearly, like a tinkling bell.

'I venture to say you nay, Mistress Jane; we desire the free air and the merry sight in company with our equals, or our betters if you will. We have no fear of men's evil eyes. Our father hath injured no man, and we be no wasters; and though we may live to dine at Duke Humphrey's table in Powl's, for these fine times must be hard on some poor souls, I gage my mother's pearls we will never drag our skirts through Moorfields.'

Mistress Jane scowled beneath her bushy brows, growled over their malapert resistance, shook her heavy whip from her high seat, but she did not bring it down over their shoulders—on the contrary, she pulled her reins, and rode off without further parley.

The girls had no time to laugh indignantly at her aggression, for the field had assembled; the beaters and rangers had word of their game, and amid môtes and cheers, cracking leashes and clattering hoofs, the hunt started and scoured across the level country—the Yorkes gazing wistfully after the vanishing crowd, and thinking of the delights of venery, the gallop over the turf, the leaps, the tumbles, the whoops and hurrahs, the winding of the death mort, the green boughs cut, the panting stag laid upon them with its four feet in the air, the bowl of wine called for that the chief forester might drink of it, and the venison keep until the cook's pleasure in the larder, the right foot cut off and presented to the principal gentleman present, and then the hunter's long, sharp knife drawn from the throat to the belly—on great occasions, a chafing-dish at hand, and the choicest pieces carbonadoed, seasoned with wine and spice, and handed round to the company.*

Cicely and Nan felt neglected and forlorn, and almost spiteful against old Gil, because he regarded the sport phlegmatically, and did not screech, and jump, and rattle over old stories, as Goody would have done in his place.

Turning slowly away, humming a little out of tune—

The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
Sing merrily we, the hunt is up;
The birds they sing,
The deer they fling,
Hey nony, nony—no;

* Thornbury's *Shakspeare's England.*

and recalling, with an effort, the stories of Elizabeth's 'taking say' of the buck at Enfield—how the beautiful princess was armed with a cross-bow, and attended by twelve young ladies in white satin, twenty yeomen in green, and eighty archers in scarlet, with yellow caps, and how she received the gift of a silver arrow, winged with peacock's plumage,—they found that they were not left alone. A sick or infirm person in a litter which had been set down within a few yards of them, but hidden by the crowd, was about to be raised by town bearers, and carried back from this extraordinary airing. The Yorkes had not time to express their curiosity at the undertaking, under these difficult circumstances, when the progress of the conveyance was arrested, and one of the subordinates crossed the sward to beg, in formal terms, that the young damsels would hold a moment's colloquy with an aged sister. Wondering, and a little apprehensive, Cicely and Nan complied, and found themselves towering above a small, powerless, recumbent figure, stretched on a couch, and lifting from a tumbled pillow a tiny, wrinkled, yet cheerful face with eyes of twinkling brightness, and a toothless mouth whose fallen lines were full of a comical rather than a pathetic expression. Her tunic was of plain black serge, and her hood of the same, and from her girdle there hung a costly rosary of gold and ivory, worn quite openly. There seemed none of the shyness of the recluse about her; she looked pleasantly conversant with the world, like the Nun

who might have started from the Tabard Inn on her way to Canterbury; and she addressed the two strange girls with the affability and garrulousness of confident, social age.

'Now who be ye, my bonny maidens, who let the gallant spirits ride by, and crawl home like snails to your churns and your toasting-forks, or your curling-tongs and your tiring-glasses, or even to your books and your beads. Nay, my lasses, taste the day when it is freshest, and the air when it is sweetest, and the sun when it is brightest, and the sport when it is hottest, and let them whistle you in vain back to your mother's apron-string.'

'Good mother,' said Cicely, gratefully, for she was a very gentle child with the old, the poor, or the oppressed, while Nan raised her eyebrows and jerked her pony's bridle, 'we are not mounted for a fleet rousing gallop, and as we have been told this morning already, it may be we had better have submitted to our fate, and remained on our stools at home.'

The ancient votaress made an offended grimace. 'Methought ye were no white-faced minxes, no chapmen's or hucksters' children, but that your cheeks had seen the sun and wind which setteth the rich blood of halls, courts, and castles, but I was mistaken; our blessed Lady knoweth I am an old woman, and see no better than a madge-howlet. Up with me, my masters, and carry me low and sure, for my brittle bones, once broken, will ne'er mend again.'

'We are daughters of Master Yorke, of Barne-

elms, cousin to the Yorkes of Crossby,' interrupted Nan, angrily; 'though it seemeth every wayfarer is to question our style, and find fault with our bearing.'

'Softly, softly, my young mistress, vouchsafe a little grace to thine elder by three-score years and upwards—a long age,' pleaded the culprit, with returning graciousness lighting up her withered ape-like face. 'I cry you pardon with all my heart; but when I was your age, I would no more have sat there than I would have lain here, whatever my gelding.'

'A narrow train is like time and tide,' exclaimed Cicely, hastily, amused, and also afraid of another chafing retort from Nan. 'No man can overrule that difficulty without he find a treasure, or obtain a post in a great man's household; and those who are condemned to suffer it, are fain not to put their fingers in their mouths and look glum before the world. Our father sits at home; we have no man to bear us company—for you can see our servitor is not mounted, no, not even scurvily—here is our whole stable, except the plough horses. Of a surety, you would not have us ride unattended into the melée?'

'Beshrew my heart, damsels, shame to you if that be your obstacle,' exclaimed the old woman, vehemently starting up—like an angry fairy who had been religiously inclined and taken orders before the Reformation—and under the influence of passion, sitting up for a few seconds bolt upright without support.

'Are God's earth and God's creatures not open to bond and free, male and female? I was wont to ride in a hunt where none but the prickers, and rangers, and the huntsman wore doublets, and hose, and bearded chins; and I would yield in knowledge of brache and doe, Noroway falcon and Persian hawk to no son of Adam. Ay, you may stare at my gown, and you may bethink you of Herne, the great huntsman, who rides with his spirits in the forest of Windsor; but it is not noon yet, my chicks, and I am still in the body, sith it be but a poor body for an October morn,' and the poor body began to whimper, but dried her eyes in a moment, not so much with the wide sleeve of her gown as with her ineradicable heartiness. She was comforted to see the sensation she created; and she was about to introduce the proudest tale of her whole life.

'Times are changed in England, my merry maidens; and I have seen the high brought low, and the holy trodden under foot. Now it is the Catholic bishops that hold the uppermost, as they well may; anon it is the heretics that sway the crozier, burn and hang, dissolve the righteous houses, scatter the choice books, profane the sacred relics.'

'We be of the Reformed Church,' interrupted Cicely, gravely.

'I doubt it not, our fathers' faith is shorn close; but the worse for you, my daughters,' answered the Romanist, undauntedly, 'and as yours is the day of triumph, you may suffer an old woman's lamenta-

tions. Ay, you have been taught to hate us, and to slander us; you have heard sad stories, and executed cruel judgments. What wonder! There is St. Radegund's here, founded by Malcolm the Scot, rest his soul, dissolved and alienated from the saint by good Catholics for the perjury and incontinence of some unhappy daughters—if they were guilty. I ween there is one epitaph in the chapel that tells another story—

Moribus ornata jacet hic bona Berta Rosata.

I have forgot many things, but not my Latin; praise the saints that ever a yeoman's daughter should compass it; my father would have been a proud man. But as I would say, deem you the saint who sequestered herself from her own good man, the son of St. Clovis—no less, and died in a monastery in Poitou, in the year of our Lord 560, would not have preferred the lightest wanton that ever stepped, to learn grace at her altars, rather than be afeard out of her blessedness by the rough, raging professors and scholars of the college of Jesu and the Virgin. To credit that the Virgin would accept such a gift! even at the hands of the good Bishop of Ely. The night of the forfeiture and the dedication, they say the whole choir rang with Radegund's chaste sobs and groans.'

Cicely blushed without reason, and Nan suggested, maliciously, 'I warrant the saint wept to think how her dead and gone husband had got the better of her —at last.'

'Was it not that same Bishop of Ely who sold his own plate, and fed out of latten platters and treen trenchers, in order to feed the poor in the hard winter?' hesitated Cicely.

The expatriated nun frowned, but did not deprive them of her revelation. 'Once upon a time,' she said, loftily, 'there lived not a gentle-born lord and lady in the land who had not heard of the famed Priory of Sopewell, or who needed to ask twice of the gifts and graces of the Lady Prioress, Julian Barnes, or who had not studied her most noble, knightly, and gladsome book, her 'Gentleman's Accademie of Hawking, Hunting, Fishing, and Armorie.' '

'Can it be! A marvel! a marvel! Tell us of the brave old Julian Barnes,' cried Nan, flushing up.

'Indeed, we know your prioress,' declared Cicely, earnestly; 'we have read her treatise, and loved to talk of her skill, and follow her orders.'

'It is well,' granted the speaker, propitiated in no slight degree by their zealous familiarity with her divinity. 'Then it becometh me to give you some particulars of the habits and ways of her who—living, had not her like for learning, emprise, industry, beauty, state, *debonnaire* sweetness, and virgin piety; and who—translated to heaven, with her fellows clean passed away, biddeth fair, unless in what she deigned to write and print, to be blotted out of memory with the niddering and the villanous. Woe worth the day! for the sun never shone on a wiser, a fairer, a

truer, a tenderer liege lady. Make room and tarry yet a space, my lay brothers. Alas! the words will out when the sense is departed; but you, good Geoffrey, and little Hughie, and Tom-a-Grant, and Cuthbert, have patience, and let me rest a little longer until I instruct these novices, and my grand-nephew will reward you with more groats when you convey me back to the town, and return to your common duties of porters and grooms—and it may be your own souls, as well as your purses, will be profited, if you give yourselves the whilst to a little profitable discourse. I will tarry here another half-hour, and the damsels, if it please them, will alight, and sit on each side of me.'

To gratify their own inquisitive spirits, and to humour this singular cloistered sportswoman, the Yorkes consulted together, and found it possible to delay their return, and put Goody Grizel and their father—if he were not plunged beyond sounding in his studies—into a quandary, as to their term of absence—leapt from horse and pony, and sent Gil, silent as ever, to encamp with the Cambridge criers and runners, where, to do him justice, he picketed in a manner that amazed his companions—a fashion made up of the outskirts of a gipsy settlement and a few of the details of one of those Flemish field-baits of man, and horse, and languishing lady, which Wouvermann was born to preserve.

Cicely and Nan sat down frankly by the litter, and explained to their entertainer that Goody Grizel had

guarded them from faintness, against their early hurried breakfast, by imposing on them a glass of aniseed before they started, and by slipping into their saddle-pouches, for refreshment on the way, slices of dried tongue, hunches of horse-bread, and fragments of quince-cake which they besought their new acquaintance to share. She heard them kindly, but refused the proffer—reminding them gently, for nothing could have hardened or soured that jovial temper, that the tide was Friday, when, according to her experience, laymen fasted from flesh, and ecclesiastics from all mortal viands.

'You may think this body too frail to want,' she said, stoutly; 'but it can as surely be sustained on angels' food as the lustiest. I will have no dispensation since my superior had none. Slanderous tongues said she loved the bugle-note better than the chapel bell, but none saw her fail at midnight mass or early matins, or ever dared allege that she shrank from penance and abstinence, although she loved not that young stomachs should be unduly tried, and ever indulged the weaker sisters. And then the devoted follower demanded, with glistening eyes, if the strangers believed her a fool thus to proclaim her proscribed faith? She avised them she was too old to be worth burning; that she had no goods wherewith to pay fines; and that she was the grand-aunt of the rich brewer in Harlestone's-lane, who, poor soul, as her beads could tell, had become heretic, and was now a chief man among the burgesses of Cambridge, with

a voice to be heard by deans and wardens—and who, in spite of his grievous declension for which she said aves and paternosters without number, afforded her shelter and protection which she could not decline—not because she could neither claim bite, nor sup, nor faggot, nor bed, since her convent was broken open and swept of its people, and its lands seized by violence—but because he was the grandson of her own dear sister Lucy who was named for the Virgin and Martyr—and so who knew but the lost might be saved, the sinner redeemed? He had his boon; in a warm corner of his house she had refuge, and was not forced, like many poor sisters in their feebleness, on the sinful world they had abjured in their strength. And still on a fresh autumn morning, when she had her airing, she loved to witness her prioress, her spiritual mother—her mother in the flesh's mistress's own sport. Having disposed of her little private history of change and trial, she had space to amplify on that of her patroness, beautiful, high-spirited Julian Barnes, as she was called when men knew and worshipped her—the Juliana Berners of posterity.

The ancient sister reported how folk judged Julian had been met in her dreams, or her solitary rambles either by a stag with a cross between its antlers—like St. Hubert, or by the sylvan saint himself, glory be to his name, and had thus been called at once to woodcraft and prayer; but the sister knew better, for her mother had been born on the estate of Roding Berners, and was a humble friend of Mistress

Julian's. Moreover, she had trained her child to follow her lady from the hall to the cloister, well content to take the veil, in order to be near her person and share her lot.

Mistress Julian, in her springtide, was the gayest and gamesomest of her house, and she was much beloved, for she was the one softly-cradled daughter; but she was also very quick and keen after all knowledge, and the special darling of the confessor, who taught her Latin and heraldry in addition to her Saxon English and French; and there was no lady, far or near, so endowed with clerkly attainments, nay, nor no gentleman. She far outstripped her brave father, Sir James, who lost his head in the strife of York and Lancaster, and her wild brothers; and being young and headstrong, though very generous, she grew proud of her learning, and mocked and scorned at all ignorance, and affected reading and writing much more than any riding, shooting, hunting, or dancing, though she had been trained to all such exercises, and being very stately in limb, fine in sense, and fearless in temper, she had arrived at excellency in these accomplishments also.

There seemed to be one of Mistress Julian's many suitors for whom her biographer had a traditional tenderness. She gave his name, Ralph of Ferntower, and turned aside her head, and closed her eyes when she spoke of his bravery, his simplicity, his early fondness for her prioress. This Ralph was no scholar; his father had been engaged fighting

fiercely in the wars of the Roses; he had been left with his little dappled pony, his young goshawk, his old hound, his lint-growing, herb-drying mother, and his doting, grey-headed seneschal to hang as he grew; and he rose to man's estate, having pursued the career that was agreeable to him and within his reach—the best rider, wrestler, bowman, and spearsman—the frankest champion, the most unblemished squire in virtue and honour; and also, though not more obtuse than his contemporaries, the most illiterate gentleman in the county.

Oh! how Mistress Julian frowned at Ralph's poverty in book wit; and worse still, how she flouted at his rash, unhappy attempts to defend his ignorance, and win her from her erudition. He was ready to despair, for neither horse nor dog, gauntlet nor crest, nor green dell, nor noontide well, nor sunset stream, nor applauding friends and retainers, could serve him when Mistress Julian's red and white cheek, and gibing tongue, and strong heart were denied him.

But he was not one of a peevish or frail nature; he said to himself, 'What others have done, that will I accomplish in my turn; yea, though it cost me months and years, Maid Julian shall own her frere.' So he shut himself up in his tower, and set himself to work with breviaries, missals, and charts—and the river flowing drowsily by, and the bees and gnats humming about the great rose herb-willow, which the commons call 'codlings and cream' that grew

three and four feet high and inches deep in the water, and the swallow chasing the short-lived midges sporting above the current—with his dogs baying, his horses neighing, his forester and falconer glum and fretful at his inaction, and his professed friends putting their hands before their mouths, and behind their hands their tongues in their cheeks, to stop their roars of laughter at his late clerkship. Let no one think the effort after plodding and meekness was a slight one to the burly man-at-arms. He had gone on a crusade, he had encountered a dragon, with less force put upon his self-will and his humours. Shallow urchins may boast themselves—for, in his leisure, the peerless among his peers, the Emperor Charlemagne laboured to accomplish their pot-hooks, and laboured in vain.

Still Ralph of Ferntower persevered; pole-cat and wolf-cub, wood-lark and wild swan, carp and trout, lived out these long June and July days for him. His arrows were dropping from their quiver, his horn untuned, his axe and lance rusty. Many a sweet night Mistress Julian peeped out from her twilight chamber to spy the strange spectacle of a night-lamp in Ralph's watch-tower; and as she did so her hand shook, her eyelids flickered and fell, and her wide, full, proud mouth quivered with laughter that had tears at its source.

But the summer was damp as well as hot. Sluggish, evilly-bred vapours, bred in fen and woodland, hung threateningly over the land. Yellow volumes

of mist from the murmuring stream floated by Ferntower, entered the heavy leaden-framed casements thrown open for air, filled the languid lungs, and searched into the slow blood of the inhabitants—in particular where the cheek was pale as from imprisonment, the brain jaded with anxious thoughts, the heart heavy with hope deferred.

The sweating sickness was overthrowing its thousands; and one morning when page and foster-brother entered the closet where Ralph had surrounded himself with a hopeless heap of parchments and intellectual apparatus, they found him undressed and unslept, breathing heavily, looking at them drowsily, complaining of a humming in his ears and a fluttering at his heart, and his hair, collar, and doublet wet as water. They carried him to his bed, and thence to his coffin, before the altar of the chapel—sent there from no bloody-stricken field, nor hoary with huge, stiff age, like his fathers, but the first Ralph of Ferntower who died in the odour of study, in green youth, worsted in a weary battle of scholarship.

Mistress Julian heard the sad news in an age when women were well accustomed to woful tidings. She had been a witness when her mother was informed that Sir James had passed to the block from the battle of Barnet; and now she closed her books, and there came over her comely countenance a wanness that was never driven out again save in the heat of hard exercise or the flush of passion. She never mooted

rue or misery; she was willing to discourse as profoundly as before; she jeered harder than ever at men and their ways, as she was free to do, being a rich, high-born, handsome, independent woman.

But Mistress Julian now began to give herself to the sports in which Ralph of Ferntower excelled. She had taken a disgust at sloth; she hated in-door repose and tranquillity; and she would gallop her gelding, and fly her hawk, after the buck and at the heron, until her attendants drew their breaths, and held their sides, and dropped from their saddles with sheer fatigue.

For all she was a great heiress and so loved her liberty, she speedily entered a convent, but she had influence and energy sufficient to keep her an Amazon. When she was elected Prioress of Sopewell, she established such rules and customs as constituted her nunnery one of mark and desire among all the religious houses in England.

After matins, when Mistress Julian descended to the court to distribute the doles, she also visited her stable, her kennel, and her perches, and she rode out a-hunting and hawking, in her hood and scapulary, with a pair or quartette of nuns, as regularly as any baron or squire in the kingdom. In the winter evening she had her long refectory table covered with jesses and bells, collars and bridles—and when she wrote then, it was to frame rules and chronicle facts in those 'manly delites,' to teach their mysteries, and to exalt their prizes, to class petty singles and

long singles, to point out a merlin and a 'tiercel gentil' from a kestril, and to explain how they should take the heron at 'a souse,' and rebeck not the falcon, but permit it to cancelier on its quarry.

Yet the Prioress of Sopewell, fawned upon by her four-footed favourites, with her bird upon her wrist and nestling in her bosom, even when the sisters chanted their grace before meals—or brushing over height and hollow, and beneath the gnarled boughs, instead of standing behind a grated window, or lying prostrate before a crucifix, loved best not the hounds which had the straight, sinewy fore-legs, the deep black muzzles and the glittering fangs, but the brindled, long-tongued breed of Ferntower. She did not care that they should be beaten in the run, she fed them with bite and sup from her own platter. She was a middle-aged woman when sister Tabitha entered the convent, rather a trusting child than a shrinking girl; and still when the Prioress of Sopewell was bent with a great burden of years, and blind with the sights which her eyes had seen, she felt feebly for the same silken, tapering heads—and these dogs licked her withered fingers the day before the nuns sang her requiem.

Cicely and Nan Yorke listened to the narrative with such good attention, and sympathetic smiles, and sighs, and dewy tears which were not sorrow, that sister Tabitha, heretics though they were, ended by apostrophizing them as dear daughters, and urging them to take the sweet air of a morning, and

follow the gladsome chase without doubt or demur, as if they were daughters indeed, and in a paroxysm of interest and regard, begging them to kiss a relic suspended from Julian Barnes' own rosary—a beechen-nut from the chaplet of a hermit of utmost sanctity—who knew but it might be as a coal from the altar on their lips? But while Nan hung back, Cicely suddenly stooped and pressed the lips of the lonely sister instead. 'We may not pay homage to a nut or a bead, mother—our faith forbids,' she explained, bashfully, when the deed was done, 'but this is our service and coupled therewith our hearty thanks to the loyal servitor of gallant Julian Barnes.'

Thus the old nun and the young Puritans parted, she to be borne back to the nook where her pious kinsman lodged her, there to wait until death should restore her to the spirit she had loved and obeyed, and Cicely and Nan to hie home, talking eagerly by the way of that Diana of old England—Julian Barnes.

The Yorkes still dwelt on the Prioress of Sopewell and her disciple who, like the Spanish friar that begged for the heretic Miles Philips, in South America, would have even given her red gold, and her friendly words to relieve the wants of heathenesse and paynimrie, of such a free, frank temper was she — after Master Yorke had tired of their simple eloquence, and while he honoured hawking, heraldrie, and armourie, was disposed to turn to the

old reports of Hegesippus, Bohemus, and Paulus Jovius, and to put up his lip at a woman's perfection in a man's recreations—a piece of insubordination and rudeness which caused Cicely to pinion him in his great chair, until Nan, weak with laughter, put one of her cambric coifs on his grey head, and transferred to her own dainty tresses the Puritan skull-cap of black silk edged with white which the squire occasionally adopted as a badge of his sect—Master Yorke at last strolled out to feed Warden, and pace in the pleasance, and Goody Grizel was left to add her testimony to their details as she twirled her distaff and spindle.

'Yea, yea, my young mistresses, a wonderful wise woman was Dame Julian—they dubbed her dame because she was mistress of the Priory, and a goodly family of staid nuns, as any knight or squire's mistress numbers her piping, giddy troop of children—and she was not the only famous woman that survived two generations. But there was great odds, sirs, there was mortal odds betwixt the twain. I was a brisk wench once, that am but a feckless wife now, and I saw in my day, what did I not see afore Mary, when Harry was marrying and burying? I saw good Master Hooper that was brent, preaching to a crowd in his gown and beaver, but I've told you that ere now. I had knowledge of a woman that hearkened to the holy Maid of Kent prophesying in Court-a-street chapel at Aldington. I mind when Harry was in France to meet the French King and

the German Emperor—when beef that has risen now was but a halfpenny the pound. I had a glimpse of my Lord Cardinal on his mule, and his dress was of finest scarlet, and his tippet sable, and he had gloves of red silk on his hands, and his very shoes were silver gilt, inlaid with pearls and diamonds; my word, a proper man! Before him walked the two tall priests with the great silver crucifixes, then two gentlemen bearing silver staves, and ahead of them again, a person of rank, carrying aloft on a laced cushion the cardinal's hat, and foremost of all, a pursuivant with a massive silver mace, (I have heard the order often and often,) and knights, and squires, and grooms, and prickers, like the saints in glory, more than any man could number. Eh! but my mother saw another sight, 'the White Rose,' my mistresses, he that men wissed was the Duke of York, and he sat in the stocks before Westminster and in Cheapside, and he read out his fraud, and she vowed she never set eyn on a face so princely and so wan.

'But neither is that the question. I was in the household of Master Timothy Dutton when he went up to Lon'on to bate the charges of his neighbour, Master Gyldesby, on his property for succour and protection in his nonage; and that was when I encountered my goodman Gil, and was clean enslaved by his ne'er so much as throwing me a word. Other men-servants were ready enough to cry 'Good-morrow, or good-e'en, or how do you fare, my pretty

maid? Wert Lady of the May last summer? Have you brewed your Hungary water, or are your corns a-budding, Mistress Grizel?'—and I was as fast to answer. But he wiled me with a look to which there was no fair response but a gold ring and the priest's blessing. Besides, I always said I should have a learned, grave man, though I should not ken a word he said, nor he stay to crack a joke with me from St. Giles' to St. John's; it was, I warrant, dull for a spell, till I was used to be the sole speaker. I was a bit of a gadder in those days—not that I was not modest and discreet, as Gil will confirm with a nod, but I liked my pleasure at church and market, and I could foot it with the best round the Maypole, at Whitsunal and Barley-break, and milkmaids' dance, and the revels when the wedding cake or the groaning cheese was cut, though we were a sober family like your worshipful father's—and I would make my calls for my gossips, I warrant, like my mistress above me. The friend I liked best was the new-made wife of an armourer near Aldgate. She was well set down in life, and wore sey as well as broadcloth, and was maybe inclined to boast herself over her equals, chamber-women and body-servants in houses of degree, but for one drawback—an old chirming feeble woman, who, will-na-nill-na, had a place in her goodman's chimney-corner, (he was a just man, and was bound by an obligation,) and who was for ever finding fault, and for ever crying mercy. I never knew

such a crabbed body: she would sit in the chimney-corner although it was broad June; and she would have the softest cushion for her settle, and the daintiest morsel for her trencher, and she would yammer and moan as if she never was served; and at times she would wring her hands and cry 'alake, alake! I'm a miserable woman,' till it chilled the blood to hear her. The only mouthful of sense she spake—and it was not very palatable to lively young things like Kate and me, and yet I'm not gainsaying, Kate was a wedded wife, and ought to have kept stiller—was, 'Bide at home, wenches—bide at home. Forsake not the known ingle and the sheltering roof, and the mean obscurity for gold, or gear, or false renown—never, never.'

'I thought the wife was somewhat carried in the head, and was careful in my thoughtless selfishness not to come too near her; and Kate that was my friend, had also a dread of her, as well as a dislike to the charge, and pled with her goodman to be quit of her. He was not contentious in other matters, but he was as firm as a rock here—which was strange, seeing he cumbered himself with a stranger or a remote connexion, and it was certain he held her in scant esteem, though he was patient with her too, monstrous patient for a man.

'I guess it was from the armourer's little love and the old wife's lamentations that I was sure without speech on the subject, that she had not been an honest woman, and her poor breast was not clean.

She was haggard and thin, like unto a ghost, and had black pits beneath her scared eyn, and a mumbling, fallen-in witch's mow, ever twisting with fractiousness and gall. So one day I marvelled greatly when the goodman, watching her from the doorway rocking herself and murmuring and moaning, said softly to his wife and her gossip, signalling towards her with his thumb—'That was once the fairest dame in Chepe. Sooth to say as many bonnets were lifted in her honour, and knees bent for her favour as are bestowed on her Grace Queen Catherine.'

''Marry, come up!' Kate cried lightly, 'bonny lasses mun have been rare in her day.'

'He frowned slightly, and looked gloomily down, while he continued astounding us, i' faith, more and more. 'Ay, sweethearts, she was the sweetest heart, the life of the life of a worthy man—my good, bountiful master, Kate, when I learned chasing and gilding; and he had repute, and wealth, and peace till he thought to have bliss likewise when he set her in his pleasant chambers, and at his board end with fine feathers to ruffle, and money to spend, and love to wanton with.'

''And how did she lose all? How fell the poor wight?' we asked, startled and shocked, and speaking low, though her hearing was almost gone.

''How fell she?' he exclaimed, with an unmirthful laugh; 'she fell not—she rose, lasses, to such a

giddy eminence and marvellous height as simple folks like my cummer and her gossip cannot scale; and God forbid they should attain the ability. Hist! yon shaking head lay in a king's bosom—but that was when it had youth's scented, flowing locks, and counted not, nor cared what should be its meed when hoary.'

'Sirs, sirs, we had looked upon and shrunk from that world's wonder, Mistress Jane Shore.'*

'Out upon the Delilah, the sinner!' cried Nan, with a purple flush of rage; but Cicely only drooped and shook with white fear and sorrow.

In the all-seeing eye the virgin heart which half-sickened at the crime, half-bewailed the criminal, might be farther removed from the sin than the other which in haste loathed and condemned both alike—for the very Lord of Purity bent sorrowfully to the light daughter of Samaria, the vile woman taken in the act, and the wretched outcast whose presence offended Simon the Pharisee.

'There be divers kinds of love,' murmured Cicely to herself, in the sad twilight; 'there be love which attempts mountains, and love which is turned by straws, such as worldly forms and engagements, and which be the true love, well-a-wot, I find it easy enough to tell. But there be another love than either, so akin to lust, so foul and so fleeting, that the Lord deliver

* In corroboration of Goody Grizel's veracity, Jane Shore is said to have been still alive in the reign of Henry VIII.

us from the abomination—and that we may escape all peril, it were well, as good Master Dyer hath it, that silly maidens dwell not on such vanities. Moreover, the poor light o' love of royalty was wiser than the nun of Sopewell. Nan and I are safest at our housewifery—close to cover.'

CHAPTER IX.

NAN'S MIND.

THE wild October wind blew over the flats, and Cicely was concerned to discover a change in Nan, her dear sister, and sole companion. Nan, who had been the merriest lass of sixteen who ever sang a catch, gave a riddle, and churned a household's butter, was assailed by a grievous gloom and moroseness, very unpleasant to witness, and full of danger if its course were not stayed. Cicely could not trace its progress, for she had not paid much heed to the first 'idle thoughts and vain deceits and exaggeration of every apprehension or desire' which betrayed its stealthy onslaught; but she was confident that this black humour was not caused by any battle with their kinsman Dick Yorke, and bore no reference to his vagaries, since their court cousin had latterly abstained hugely from their country company, and showed strong symptoms of the growth of a town memory which reckoneth not common grandsires, or old benefits, or former fami-

liar usages. They heard of Dick from chance hands, as what they might have always known him, the aptest and boldest, as well as the freest and gayest, of poor rising gentlemen, and what wonder that he got flighty and faithless in his prospects of promotion —they not being so well able to whistle him down the wind, was not matter to alter their relations. No more flashing and dashing to Barne-elms; not even an idle missive, with 'speed, speed, speed,' above the superscription.

Nan was no more provoked by Dick's withdrawal than she was jilted by him—pooh! the wild child, she had always put him down, and held him at a discount in her high, wilful way. Nan was much too proud to make an obeisance to Dick the courtier, or even to suffer Dick to make an obeisance to her. So there was little union, though many alliances for mischief and uproar, lost between them.

Cicely was sadly at a loss to explain the shadow which had fallen upon Nan—not a mild meditativeness which might have improved the shallowness and headiness of sixteen—but a sullen affection of the spleen which boded no good, and threatened the altered girl's health of body and mind.

Cicely scrupled to point out the phenomenon to her father, too oblivious to find it for himself in so near an object of interest as his girl, because Nan was at present so wayward in her humours, and so angered by any observation. Grizel would have it that the trouble was occasioned by the solitary life of

her young people, and the scanty breaks in their daily occupations; she would have had them shaken out of their privacy, pranking before the world, riding into Cambridge, junketing at the old Hancocks, getting fairing at Stourbridge fair where the Kendal men still maintained their pre-eminence, for more reasons than one—because she would fain busk each bride, and prepare each bridal chamber before she parted with her young mistresses, for instance—but such proceedings, so easy in themselves, were impossible to the unprotected, unfurnished girls.

Old Goody Grizel's reasoning sounded irrelevant enough to Cicely—on account of the circumstance that they had grown up a separate household; and it was also an unwelcome suggestion to the affectionate heart which loved home too warmly to own abuses within its bounds, and to whose quick feelings their country 'delites' had been so numerous and charming that if they were ever to pall upon her taste, or to come languidly, and a little dolefully after a vision of other pleasures, Cicely would turn upon herself, rebut the notion, and be as offended at any question of their supremacy, as Nan in her peevish opposition to counsel and rejection of remedy.

Cicely, in her shrewd sense, resisted the idea of witchcraft and the evil eye, though the Puritans claimed exorcism as a proof of their divine call; and the theory afforded a horrible attraction to the fancy. The family of Mr. Starkie, of Cleworth, had not yet been distressed by the wicked infliction of their

Catholic relatives. Darrel had not commenced his hideous campaign, which drew down Dr. Harnett's pungent and disdainful elucidation—'If any of you have a sheep sick of the giddies, or a horse of the staggers, or a knavish boy of the school, or an idle girl of the wheel, or a young drab of the sullens, and hath not fat enough for her porridge, or butter enough for her bread, and she hath a little help of the cramp or the epilepsy to teach her to roll her mouth, gnash her teeth, startle with her body, hold her hands and arms stiff; and therewith an old Mother Nobbs hath by chance called her idle young housewife, or bid the devil scratch her, then, no doubt but Mother Nobbs is the witch, and the girl owl-blasted.' Fortunately, Nan not only bore no malice against any old Mother Nobbs, but was very wrathful at the slightest suspicion that anything ailed her. Notwithstanding one man wrote this cutting truth, the belief in witchcraft was general and powerful for a century to come.

Cicely Yorke had read of the witches of Warbois, and Master Throgmorton's children, and was aware that Sir Samuel Cromwell had endowed an annual lectureship in Huntingdon, in gratitude for his wife's escape from the same unfathomable peril; and she did tremble a little at any wicked curse like that contained in the words—

> Gip with a mischief and clink with a bell,
> I will go to heaven, and thou shalt go to hell.

But she humbly considered that if the devil, in

another than a purely experimental sense, entered one young woman, 'for that she endeavoured to make herself look like a picture of Venus'—into another, 'for uttering sharp words'—into a third, 'because she did with some greediness eat the leaf of a lettuce, the devil, unknown to her, clinging to the nether part of the leaf, forgetting to bless it with the sign of the cross;' or, in Cicely's words, to say grace over it, what wench of them would escape him?

On the other hand, Cicely had an honest and pious abhorrence to the use on her own part of anything approaching to diabolical agency—such as spells, cabalistic words, or incantations—for the purpose of lightening Nan's moping mood—whether it were produced by fulness of habit, or vapours on the brain; and she only used such simple and lawful means as the pleading with Nan, fruitlessly, to drink the first thing of a morning a draught of water in which balm had been sodden, or to try marigolds in her broth, or else to hang round her neck a bit of sailor's coral—since she could not obtain a chalcedony, or an ebon stone, which, along with the carbuncle, were accredited, by subtle affinities and loss of particles, 'to drive away childish fears, divels, overcome sorrow, and, hung about the neck, repress troublesome dreams.' Cicely regarded these precious stones much as any simple Norse maiden would have viewed the leaden heart placed in the bosom of Minna Troil.

When Cicely was in the midst of her perturbation concerning Nan's argument with life, she was suddenly aroused and deeply grieved by a new symptom in the case—extraordinary and portentous. Nan, merry, proud, guileless Nan, certainly sought the company of gross, rude, greedy Sir Hugolin, with his red breast, broad as a buff-coated bandolier's, his hog's beard, his bold eye, his big oaths, his immoderate sucking and sopping, and his otherwise close-fisted housekeeping.

Sir Hugolin, from propinquity and sundry unhappy rights which he did not push to extremity, acquired over his impoverished acquaintance, Master Yorke, was too well known at Barne-elms—but until now the great brutish baronet, beggarly in the true sense of the word, had been the natural aversion of the modest maidens, particularly as he was inclined to overpower them with his awkward, but ardent notice.

There Sir Hugolin chose to sit at one of the hall windows, drinking his creditor's wine, grunting a reply to the scholar's wisdom, or else crushing his learned references with his own loud, imperious, clownish words—while Cicely and Nan shifted their seats in the gallery, until they got fairly behind his back, or arose and ran past him into the pleasance, to spend the hours of his visit out of doors with their four-footed favourites, until he took his wished-for departure.

Master Yorke, through his very simplicity, did

not suffer from these visitations as he might have done. They were an infliction, and he sighed over them as he did over his ill-fated debt. Sir Hugolin was at once an ignoramus and a hunks, and, of course, a cross to Master Yorke; but Master Yorke cherished an old philosopher's patience and charity, and in his hospitality and honour he would not recognise that Sir Hugolin's liberties were taken on the understanding of his claims on the estate, or that he had a double meaning, and a base end in his calls.

An ill-matched pair were Master Yorke and Sir Hugolin, glaringly contrasted without and within. Master Yorke would endeavour to propitiate his guest, not servilely or with an ulterior end, but from the mere motive of courteous entertainment. He would talk on such matters as he supposed within his listener's scope; he would direct his discourse to hunting, fowling, fishing—and would descant on guns, nets, pipes, 'stawking horses,' 'setting dogs,' 'coy ducks,' 'peculiar lines,' and 'false flies;' and Sir Hugolin would blurt out his experience at home or in Ireland always with reference to his own prowess and supremacy—with the most barefaced arrogance and narrow self-sufficiency: but when Master Yorke proceeded to describe pleasantly and instructively the sports of other times and countries, 'the Persian kings hawking butterflies' with sparrows, and the emperors of Muscovy 'reclaiming eagles to fly at hindes and foxes,' whereof one was sent as a present to the Queen's grace—and when in his applause,

lavishly bestowed on angling, he diverged, with Burton after him, to explain that 'if so be the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walk to the brook-side, pleasant shade by the sweet silver streams, and he hath good air and sweet smels of fine fresh meadow flowers; he hears the melodious harmony of birds; he sees the swans, herons, ducks, water-hens, cootes, and many other fowle with their broode, which he thinketh better than the noise of hounds or blast of horns, and all the sport that they can make;' and quoted with equal gusto from St. Bernard, 'A sick man sits upon a green bank; and, when the dog-star parches the plaines, and dries up rivers, he lies in a shadie bowre, and feeds his eyes with variety of objects, hearbs, trees: and to comfort his misery, he receives many delightsome smels, and fils his ears with that sweet and various harmony of birdes. Good God! what a company of pleasures hast thou made for man!' then Sir Hugolin turned a deaf ear, or yawned wearily.

Master Yorke varied the discussion to the games of ringing, bowling, keel-pins, quoits, hurling, racing, affording Sir Hugolin another opportunity to break in with an incoherent account of his last successful aim, both on foot and on horseback, at the head of a goose 'hanged alive between two cross-posts;' but his narrative, however minute and eager, sounding fierce in his thick, fiery utterance, could not last for ever, and Master Yorke was fain to stifle another fit of the gapes, by remarking on the news of the last

Flemish cloth-workers established at Norwich, and their cruel treatment from the natives, in spite of the Queen's protection and licence.

Sir Hugolin swore, with a thump on the table and a cock of his bonnet, that they richly deserved their persecution; 'Cogs and wounds, he would pink every son of the vile foreign dogs come to prey on honest Englishmen.'

Here Master Yorke, for the life of him, could not help a mild, useless remonstrance.

'Look ye, sir, the Easterlings were the medium of our foreign trade; and though they maybe kept it to themselves a thought too long, who was to blame for suffering their helping hand to close in a gripe? Haven't we the Spanish slop, the Italian doublet, the Danish sleeve, and the French standing collar, and do not these all meet on one person?' and, he added reverently, putting his hand on some of his scattered volumes, 'See ye not the Greek Testament, the Rhenish Testament, Master Tyndale's Testament, and the Genevese Testament, and are not all these, under the controversies that would tear them to pieces, but so many different shapes for the same glorious garment of the gospel, intended to fit alike every soul of man? wherefore, my gallant guest, should not we recognise a bond of brotherhood?'

But Sir Hugolin was by no means won over to peace. On the contrary, he vowed, muttering savagely, that he should be hanged and quartered, as he had caused be done to many a foe, before he

owned Popish mass-mongers, French jackanapes, Irish savages, and Scotch rogues to be related to him by one drop of blood. Then, overcoming his wrath by a great effort, for the man was both malignant and dogged, because it was not his present cue to offend his milksop of a neighbour, he endeavoured clumsily to make an atonement for his contradictions, and to flatter the squire's vanity by craving the assistance of his mathematics, to identify an evilly-disposed person in his household who had purloined certain goods from his store-room.

Master Yorke proposed to decline the commission, and averred gravely that he, a penitent sinner, did not deal in the black art; at the same time he acknowledged that alchemy did afford insight into many secrets, and it evidently excited him to have an opportunity of making an experiment, so that, notwithstanding his modest negative, he was almost immediately drawing up the necessary facts from the dictation of Sir Hugolin.

'The applicant is Sir Hugolin Botelier, of Rackheath; the man's name whom he suspects is Gregory Hayman, a dyvour, a beggarly loon, a hanger-on in the household—of an age under forty, not more—the articles three barrels of Dansk rye, and two bales of wool—the place the store-chamber adjoining the long gallery.'

Master Yorke afterwards amplified on the prevailing notions, said he was not warranted in declaring with many of his Puritan brethren 'that the

beginning of the Gospel of John proved the existence of a mystical word, like the Shem Hamphorash of the Jews, though questionless there were legends enough of the power of sound. Neither did he possess a shew-stone or holy-stone wherein he could make his discoveries, and they had the authority of Friar Bacon that 'God permits dæmons to exhibit themselves by reflections in polished bodies, so that boys looking into the mirror can see the spectral appearance of things stolen, the persons who took them, and the places where they are laid' (certes, a useful faculty), 'hence the fear of looking into looking-glasses at night.' Master Yorke could vouch his wenches glanced aside fearfully when they passed them glittering in the blaze of the wood or turf fire, or in the flame of a candle, though they stared right fixedly into them at high noon. Further, the first symptom of devilish possession in one Catherine Wright was a vision of a child without feet seen in a well where she went for water.

Sir Hugolin, who had of late been listening to Master Yorke's sapiency attentively, nay, with an open-mouthed interest, shrank a little at the description of this spectral appearance, and clapped his hand on his sword as if to defend himself from similar horrors with which his heated brain and his campaign in Ireland might supply him. Master Yorke, pleased by his apparent sympathy, condescended to present to his ignorant eyes a scheme of letters, one of the cabalistic products of judicial

astrology, which he had not invented, and to which he frankly confessed he had not found the key. Sir Hugolin touched it much more gingerly than if it had been naked steel. Verily, to the uninitiated it bore no alarming indications, but consisted literally of the following hieroglyphics :—

		H	C	R	V			
	I	D	Z	G	A	I		
I	A	O	I	G	O	D	H	
V	M	Z	R	V	U	R	C	
A	B	N	A	F	O	S	A	
S	D	A	Z	G	E	A	S	
	I	A	B	R	D	I		
		L	A	N	G			

Then Nan, who was wont to be so shy of the coarse, imperious old soldier, came sliding towards the company—asked with her pretty coquetry if she should fill Sir Hugolin's glass, since Cicely kept the keys and gave out the flasks—trifled with the office while the round, blood-shot eyes—fiery like those of a wild beast—of the heavy knight lit up, and gloated on her budding beauty; and Master Yorke, gentlest of governors, most indulgent of fathers, and most unsuspicious of gentlemen, moved uneasily on his chair, and marvelled with secret irritation at the humours and encroachments of silly children. Next, Nan would begin forwardly to question Sir Hugolin on the Irish wars—a subject on which the tied tongue loosened into fluency—excusing her curiosity on the plea of her womanly ignorance and her de-

light in the bold exploits and hair-breadth escapes which the knight could unfold.

Then, indeed, under the golden flush of the setting sun, or the ruddy glow of the fire, there was something that took one's breath, in the fierce unction with which the story-teller told of Con, surnamed the Boccah, the famous head of the great family O'Neill; how he pronounced a curse on any member of his posterity who should learn English, sow corn, or build a house, yet how he himself submitted to England, and accepted the earldom of Tyrone for the title of the O'Neill, which he was wont to boast was the oldest in Christendom; how his son Matthew was murdered; and how his son Shane, with a strong hand, subdued the O'Reillys and O'Donnels, hanged a follower for feeding on English biscuit, and built a fort, 'Fogh ne gall,' 'Abomination of the stranger,' and in his turn compounded or dissembled, and swore fealty to Elizabeth; and afterwards, at a banquet given by his old allies the Scots and an English officer named Piers, he was also butchered, and his head sent to Sir Henry Sidney, from whom the executioners received a thousand marks reward —for one trapped and slain man; how the natives declared the English arsenal in the cathedral of Derry was blown up by St. Colombkill's sending a huge wolf from the woods with a burning brand in his mouth, which he dropped amongst the powder.

And when fascinated Nan would grow white and

shiver, child-like, at the horrors on which she had requested to sup, Sir Hugolin would recall his thoughts from the past, clutch at her skirts, or her black locks, to detain her beside him, and swear roundly that never a yellow-haired colleen singing to her clairshach, false to her barbarous countrymen, and enamoured of their accomplished invaders, just as the pale, fine English maidens were sometimes bewitched by the robber chiefs—(mark ye, Sir Henry Bagnall's sister, who fled with a will to the hold of the arch-traitor, the notorious Hugh, Lord Tyrone, and was there puling, and pining, and dying, because she had not the wit of a Sabine daughter, or a Roman wife, to end the strife to the death between her husband and her brother)—not one, English or Irish, rude or gentle, was to compare with young Mistress Nan Yorke who could sigh at what was doleful, and giggle in a merry mood, and dance disposedly, and in all moods was nigh as irresistible as any lass in the two kingdoms.

Cicely would stare and listen, and listen and stare, in vexed bewilderment; and Nan would cast a glance at her elder sister, half-defying, half-mocking, and, as was always the way with her in her froward fits, would become so much the more confirmed in her naughtiness by the very wondering, chiding protest she read in those brown eyes, so like—yet so much deeper and darker than her own.

At last Master Yorke would rise stiffly, and with a dry apology for the early hours of his household,

and the sluggish blood of age, which sought repose, and which rendered him a niggard in his hospitality, would offer the stirrup-cup to Sir Hugolin, unless, indeed, he would stay for evening prayers—a diet so unaffectedly unpalatable to the bullying, blasphemous, blood-thirsty knight, that the mere mention of it sent him from the dilapidated precincts of Barne-elms post-haste.

The motes were dancing in the sunshine of the silent hall; Grizel was a-milking, Gil was wielding his flail, Master Yorke was abroad, Cicely was feeding her doves, and Nan looking on—the two sisters alone together in the hush, the breathless brightness which pervades even a late autumnal noon. Nan could not bear the stillness, only broken by the ticking of the clock, and the twittering of wings, she came behind Cicely, and thrust her hand through the bars of the cage, she advanced and withdrew the little plume of corn after which the blue wings fluttered, she whistled a challenge, she enticed a bird to her shoulder, and then frightened it off by her rapid motions, she tied together the bands of Cicely's coif, and rolled up her apron; and at last, tired of her childish tricks, she sat down to rest, shading her face with her hands from the hot glare. Not thus had she shrunk from it, yon summer's day, when Dick Yorke hailed her talking to her train in the porch.

When Cicely passed behind Nan a little time afterwards, and stumbled against her, and Nan raised her head pettishly to scold her sister's awkwardness, Cicely

saw that Nan's crimson cheeks were moist, and her dark hair dishevelled, as if it had been pressed from a burdened brow.

'My dear sister, what aileth thee?' remonstrated Cicely, with the truest care, and not sorry to have a clear cause to rate Nan, if need be, for her inconstancy and nameless regrets—sitting down beside her, and detaining her with the authoritative hand of affection and kindred on her rebellious shoulder, so that Nan could not escape an examination as she had hitherto done.

'It is nought, sister, save that I am sick of this horrid sunshine,' alleged Nan, drumming with her foot on the boards.

'For that matter an October sunshine need trouble no one, but this aversion is not a good sign; it is the foul birds and beasts of prey that abhor God's full light, and what sayeth the Bible, Nan, that 'Whoso hateth and turneth from the light'—(the spiritual light, of which the sun's light is the emblem)—'his deeds are evil,' and thereon Master Dyer commented most powerfully last Candlemas, when the Bartons thought to resist the discipline of the Church.'

'I'll swear you remember every sermon and text from Midsummer to Yule,' cried Nan, derisively; 'for me I abide by the command that no woman be permitted to teach or to preach, so I'll none of your sermons, Cicely; let go my sleeve, madam. I suppose I am cunning, and stealthy, and cruel, as

the gled, or fox, or wolf, to which you compared me,' ran on Nan, most unreasonably.

'But Nan, dear Nan, my own Nanny,' pleaded Cicely, ready to cry over the offence taken at her trope, 'will you not speak kindly and forgive me if I made a reflection unadvisedly, and tell me what hath come over thee that thou art not as light and happy as formerly? Dost remember how very fond we've always been, Nan, as the sole pair of the family, and the merry hours we've seen, and how we did not fear to grow old and live and die together?'

'Ay, I remember fast enough,' granted Nan, moodily; 'I was a child once, and easily pleased, and reckoned these dull doves the bonniest and brightest of all the birds of the air.'

'And why have you tired of my peaceful doves which mind me of the ark? I am sure I do not let them trouble you,' retorted Cicely, unable to restrain a dry accent of reproach.

'Oh, they are so tame and so grey, I can fancy them no longer,' cried Nan, perversely; 'I want a scarlet or green goose from the Indies, though it should dab at my face and tear my bosom. I would like a mowing monkey to play me such queer gambols as I've heard tell of; and I'd have cloth of bodkin and velvet in place of this everlasting cloth or at best tiffany,' fretted Nan, in her vain idleness.

'And perhaps you would prefer a new visage—fair and feigning, and a smooth lying tongue—to a

brown face, and a blunt true speech like mine, such as you have heard all your days,' added Cicely, wounded by the girl's flippancy and folly.

'No, Cicely,' Nan said, in a lower tone, 'you are unjust. I love you and my father, and Goody Grizel, and Gil, and I can never weary of your old faces; but I may weary for a change, and long for variety, stir, and novelty, like other young things before me.'

'But if you cannot have them, girl, is it wise or worthy to sigh after what are but toys?'

'You are wondrous wise, Cicely; I don't pretend to be above my kind.'

'Still my father has reared and maintained us to the best of his means, and loved us more fondly, perhaps, than if he were a king and we princesses; and it seemeth ungrateful to him to be discontented with our lot. Nay, think Nan, of the losses he has undergone, the dangers he has passed through for conscience' sake, and the deprivations he himself endures from his impoverished purse,' pleaded Cicely.

'Ah! poor father!' exclaimed Nan, penitently.

'And reflect, Nan,' continued the elder, taking courage to buffet the current, 'how contrarily you used to view our fate. How content you were that we should be two wights light of heart, light of conscience, and light of dower, even though our stomachs should sometimes be light also—how you agreed with me that we should not complain, though

no matches were made for us—no pairing of fortunes and hearts where we were concerned, but that we should cling to each other; and we feared no shifts of housekeeping, but laughed over our plans of sparing groats and gathering nobles, and could foresee our clean hearth, our puddings, black and white, our yarn and worsted, our crust for a beggar. Hath this economy become so formidable to thee, Nan?'

'Dreams, dreams, sister Cicely,' groaned Nan.

'Dreams!' echoed Cicely, wonderingly; 'this old crumbling house is not so perishable that it is but a dream—it will outlast our day. There are no moths in our webs. Our mumbling talk, when our jaws are toothless, will still be brisk and real. 'Dost know the price of oats in Allerton market?' 'Alake, alake! the tod has been among the geese over-night.' 'Gramercy, sister, I have a shooting pain in my right toe; I doubt me it will prove the gout, inherited from our grandsire, Dick of Bosworth, who had more capons, and beeves, and fatter ale on which to gormandize than his descendants.' Laugh, Nan.'

But Nan was obdurate.

'The world is solid enough, and will e'en wag on; I believe it honestly,' declared the spoilt child; 'but there are fumes, and vapours, and fancies which give a body no rest, and maul everything.'

A change passed over Cicely's open, beautiful face—a little cloud of self-accusation dissipated resolutely.

'What of them, Nan? We will outlive them, we will trample them down—temptations of the evil one as they may be—we will be two good, upright, faithful souls; and these dreams will dissolve in cloudland, or—or they will fructify in another life. If our existence here be ever stale and faint from want of exercise for our capacities, or if we be afflicted with unprofitable longings—every condition has its disease—this is but our cross, Nan Yorke.'

'I'll have none of it,' resisted Nan, violently; 'I'm weary o' this life.'

'What!' exclaimed Cicely, incredulously, 'a child of sixteen weary of her friends, of the goodly world, of the morning and the evening, of the day's duties and the night's rest. You must be grievously indisposed, Nan.'

Cicely paused to take breath, then continued pathetically—'What, Nan! the after-crop of nuts are still hanging by the water; would you rather not pull them? The Christmas ale is brewed, and in the butt—when it is in the can, do you wish yourself absent from the chimney-corner? The musk-rose by the lattice there, will bud afresh next summer—had you as lief not see nor scent it? The evening star will rise on the long midsummer day, are you content to miss the single spark of fire in the never-ending twilight? Master Dyer is coming up in these wild autumn nights, now that the corn is in and the field-work over, to assemble us solemnly, to probe our hearts and raise our souls

to the great Lord of the Harvest, who will gather his sheaves on the plain of Jezreel after Armageddon is fought, and the terrible days of his vengeance are ended. Ah, then we feel ourselves soaring on eagle's wings far above this earth and its dreams. Nan, Nan, you will not be left behind?'

'You speak great sounding words, Cicely, but I cannot take them to heart,' persisted the girl, listlessly.

Cicely was in despair. 'We were so happy, Nan, though we were two poor girls,' she pleaded, almost wringing her hands; 'with our duties and our 'delites;' we were as busy as the day was long, and as merry as crickets, as we well might be, having so excellent a father, such faithful and attached servants—with healthy constitutions, easy minds, country pursuits and pastimes. Your coverlet is yet unbegun, Nan; do attempt it. I am certain it will win the buckle for clever conceit and neat execution. We were to go herb-gathering this very afternoon, the weather is so rare and fine to gather hoarhound, and Good King Henry, and the later plants. Think, sweet, of the hedges we will push through, the ditches we will leap across, and the strange berries and leaves, and little soldiers and devil's gold-rings we will find, for as far gone as the year is; and how hugely tired we will be, and what comical figures we will cut when we return with great balls of earth at our stout shoes, and our petticoats tucked up anyhow; and how cosy the

hall will be, and how drowsily the wheels will turn round and round — not a single dream in their spokes; and now that our store for the season is complete—what work we will have soddening, and steeping, and skimming, and pounding for the next two or three weeks till we've dye for the vats, nettle fibres for the coarse napery—poppy powders to woo sleep, and black mustard to warm the heart—and what ado to number and name the herbs that they may be ready to be given out during the winter to the poor creatures who have had neither time nor knowledge to lay them up on their own account and for their own need. Eh! well, Nan, though the whole world were darkened to me—which God forbid—methinks I would brighten up to the herb-gathering.'

To understand Cicely's enthusiasm and the strength of its foundation, let the reader look to the following recipes from 'My Book of my Wife's Hand,' belonging to Lord Audley, with respect to what figures in their ingredients.

'A GOOD MEDICINE FOR WEAKNESS AND CONSUMPTION.

'Take a sow pig of nine days old, flea him and quarter him, and put him in a stillatory, with a *handful of spearmint, a handful of red fennel, a handful of liverwort, half a handful of red nepe* (*turnip*), *a handful of celery,* nine dates, clean picked and pared, a handful of great raisins, and pick out the stones, and a quarter of an ounce of mace, two sticks of good cinnamon bruised in a mortar, and distil it

together, with a fair fire, and put it in a glass, and set in the sun nine days, and drink nine spoonfuls of it at once when you list.'

'A COMPOST—ITEM.

'Take a porpin, otherwise called in English a hedgehog, and quarter him in pieces, and put the said beast in a still with these ingredients—item, a quart of red wine, *a pint of rose water*, a quart of sugar, cinnamon, and great raisins, one date, *and twelve nepes.*'*

Also con over the following abridged list with its application from a valuable authority :—

'To the head, anniseeds, foal-foot, betony, calamint, eyebright, lavender, bayes, roses, rue, sage, marjoram, piony, &c.; for the lungs, liquorice, hyssop, horehound, water germander, &c.; for the heart, borage, buglosse, saffron, bawm, basil, rosemary, violet, &c.; for the stomach, wormwood, mints, centaury, sorel, purslan, &c.; for the liver, darthspine, agrimony, endive, succory, barbareys; for the spleen, maidenhair, finger-ferne, dodder of thyme, hoppe, the rind of the ash; for the joints, camomile, cowslips, &c.'

Grant that the said reader shut his eyes, and fancy luxuriously 'the bank whereon the nodding violets grow,' with, not far off, the grey leathern rind of the ash clinging to its stem, and beneath, if there be more trees bounded over by timid fawn and coney,

* Cook Taylor's *Romantic Biographies.*

the tremulous tufts of the maidenhair—itself a fairy birch-tree, and the regularly divided fronds of the finger-fern, (and thanks be to the writer who first noted the resemblance between the cryptogamic life of the land and the sea—so that we can traverse the lanes with the beauty of their green, skeleton clothing, and there will float for ever through our minds the yet more exquisite algæ, the brown, green, and purple zones that bound old ocean).

Next, let our friend climb a sandy bank where he may hear the click of grasshoppers, and look out for ant-hills, and let him gaze, if he do nothing else, at the carpet of gay pink and white liquorice—always dusty in its gaiety, like a ball-room belle—and dainty eyebright; and rich purple thyme. Counsel him to seek the standing corn, rustling in the breeze, for the clinging, tiny betony, and the brilliant, nodding blue-bell, hurt-sickle, or centaury. Suggest that he grope into deep, cool pools, overhung with silver willows, and where the water is broken with the sudden splash of otter and water-rat, and where the ousel and swallow skim over its surface, for the myrtle-leaved, racemed germander, and the brooklime; send him to the uplands again, for the starry, white camomile, with its tassels of leaves, and the hairy, deeply-pricked bugloss and the borage. Charge him to haunt old, mossy-walled, terraced gardens for the bays, the lavender, and the roses. Bid him seize the tall, pungent, white-washed, creamily-budding, fringed agrimony, by

hedge-roots where in spring he hunted out the yellow stars of the primroses. Say to him, if he can do nothing more, to imagine the bawm, the basil, the rosemary, the marjoram in formal beds along some pleached alley, or cherished in forgotten sweet-pots. Ask him to confess candidly, if, to explore all these localities, to possess himself of their treasures, and inadvertently of many a pleasant observation and record as a supplement, would not have sweets as well as gold digging. Above all, impress upon him to ponder this fact, that in Cicely Yorke's generation these weeds were of potent virtue; when they did not apply to the health, they furnished such comforts as fleawort, and fleabane, and fumitory, 'whose smoke exorcised evil spirits,' and offered very suggestive and appropriate titles, as 'Sweet Cicely,' 'Kiss me behind the garden-gate,' 'Sauce all alone,' 'Head-work;' and this lore belonged mostly to old women and ladies of rank, who made plants their assiduous study, and turned them to universal use; and in so doing, without a doubt, conferred great benefits on their own and succeeding times.

Any one may understand what herb-gathering was, and comprehend how different a saunter along a foot-path or high-road, for air and exercise, or even the botanical excursion of a fine lady of the present day, from the expedition of one of those good, energetic young housekeepers of Queen Bess's era, armed with shears, clasp-knives, baskets, and if not 'on hospitable,' certainly on merciful 'thoughts intent.'

Cicely was right, that herb-gathering was one of her most enviable occupations.

But Nan was obstinate. She even flung out that, since Cicely thought so much of simples, she had better become a wise woman, or an apprentice to the famous Maister Doctor Burcot at once.

Cicely's forbearance failed her. At a certain point the Yorkes were all fiery, like generous substances of all sorts. 'Shame, Nan,' she cried, passionately; 'I see thy drift; thou wouldst win that battered hogshead, rusty musquetoon, and utter hunks, Sir Hugolin Botelier. Fie on thee, lass, thou art not nice.'

To Cicely's horror, Nan, though bitterly aggrieved by the tone of the accusation, did not deny its substance.

'An what if I be willing, mistress?' she demanded; 'I wot I am not accountable to you. I cannot worsen my fortunes, as I see them. I will be a right rich and powerful lady; and when I come to die, who knows but I'll found a hall or college, like the best of them? In life I'll have my laces, my fine furs, my gold girdle, and my jewelled stomacher; my riders and my runners. I'll work no more; but take my ease, and toy for my pleasure. I'll have my roan, my litter, my foot-cloth, my ape-jacks, my games of cards, and what not. Sir Hugolin will not find fault with the price.'

'Nan, are you mad?' faltered Cicely; 'will these gauds make you happy?'

'They'll cause me to forget pain,' muttered Nan, sullenly.

'Have you been so miserable without them? I did not know—I would not have thought so; but if so, I will work my fingers to the bone, our father will sell his most curious instruments, to find you bravery; but, oh, Nan, do not you sell yourself!' implored Cicely, piteously.

'I see no selling in the matter. It is but marrying a rough-and-ready old knight—parcel bear, parcel curmudgeon—and no more toil, no more hopes and fears, no more scorn, and prithee, what the better are other men, Cicely? I have heard thee rail at the whole sex, and declare we were better without them.'

'Now, God forgive me, if I misled thee by my censoriousness or my foolish jesting. I did not mean it—forget it, Nan. Men are often selfish and passionate; methinks it is their nature, as it is that of bears to hug, and tigers to spring; but there are heavenly spirits, virtuous hearts, and noble tempers among them. I were worse than a wittol to deny it—my father and Master Dyer before me, and even our gruff man Gil, how unwearied and unconscious he is! and those vain, reckless young gallants, they are mostly compassionate to women and children. I eat my words, Nan, every one of them; I would not have the grapes sour; I would give men their due. Why, there is our gay cousin, Dick——'

'Let be, Cicely, let be,' interrupted Nan, sharply. 'I like fair-dealing and constancy, and you will be defending cut-purses and cut-throats next. After all, I care not for your standard. I have my own, and I will a mort rather live an old man's dearie than a young man's drudge.'

'Nan, Nan, it is not so; will you not take warning? After the first month he will beat you and starve you—he is known over the whole country as a tyrant and a churl—he will compel you to serve him, he will stint you of necessaries. Poor, foolish wench, you will be desperate, desolate——. She has not heard me; she has burst away, and is running into the chase beyond sight and hearing. Oh! what will I do to alarm my father, to aid him to save our Nan?' And being at that moment unprovided with any feasible means, Cicely sat down again in the gallery, and relieved herself by shedding a few hot tears for the perversity of human nature, the contrariness of their fortunes, which placed them partly in Sir Hugolin's power, although that circumstance was not taken into consideration—child-like—in Nan's extravagances; and at the faithless desertion of her project by her own dear, only sister Nan, when they were to have lived together two honourable spinsters for ever and a day.

Cicely guessed how utterly disastrous Nan's mad scheme would prove to her if she succeeded in putting it into execution—if she remained stubborn in her strange, morbid, self-indulgent ambition. Cicely

dreaded the end. Master Yorke would certainly disapprove of the wooer, and forbid the banns, but Nan, in her frenzy, might well prove an undutiful daughter—and who so easy to deceive and evade as the wise man whose wisdom was not of this world? and where the power was on Sir Hugolin's side—the overgrown wealth to buy absolution for offences—how hopeless as well as fruitless punishment for aggression and outrage! Cicely, in her dolefulness, saw nothing short of Nan's destruction if she continued in the same wilful and worldly mind. Nan could not preserve her foolish predilection for one so opposed to her in nature and breeding—age was a minor obstacle. Once the luxuries she coveted, and the rest she longed for, palled on her, they would never content the giddy, youthful Nan for the terrible loss of her freedom—the absence of all congenial, nay, of all but the most repulsive companionship. What then? Good Cicely shrank from the black gulf, but her sense and her keen instincts forced its noxious secrets. At that period the marriage tie hung marvellously loose on men's honour and women's consciences. Ceasing to regard the ceremony as a sacrament, they forgot to hold it as a moral obligation, binding by the authority of the Author of law as the Ten Commandments themselves. Henry's wives,—his sister Margaret of Scotland's husbands, and their histories, were still current in the world's memory. It was freely reported and believed that Dudley, Duke of Northumberland,

planned three royal marriages for his three sons, and a choice of queens for himself, and that it formed no serious impediment to his machinations that, happily for themselves, the two sons who survived his criminal attempts—Ambrose and Robert—were already wedded. The wives would not have stood in the way of the husbands' promotion, as truly, from an early death, whether by nature or violence, Amy Robsart did not long cumber the path upon which Elizabeth smiled her royal smile. Elizabeth's reign and those of the preceding and succeeding sovereigns were rife with such horrors, culminating in guilt and wretchedness in the lives of Frances Howard, Countess of Essex, her accomplice the Earl of Somerset, her forsaken husband, and his murdered friend Sir Thomas Overbury. Cicely could not see into futurity, or in her innocence fathom the pit of sin and suffering, but she could guess too well how hateful an ill-balanced bond might grow; how Nan, with her simple head and warm heart, and undisciplined temper, Puritan though she was, might loathe her harsh and vile partner: and then, when some thoughtless, unbridled, ardent gallant, like Dick the courtier—for somehow Cicely could not fancy Nan distracted by a grave, stern, antagonistic spirit as another might be—and Cicely had also come, she knew not how, by a perception of the gay laugher Dick's stormy wealth of will, and capability of narrow, but intense absorption of interest and purpose—when such a one, courteous, kind, fond with

an unhallowed but cleaving, devoted fondness, crossed Nan's joyless, thorny road which she had made for herself with her own rash, disobedient child's hands, where she walked in ghastly misery a neglected, insulted, hated and hating wife—oh, then, though Sidney was writing in his stainless chivalry that the court was 'the marriage place of love and virtue,' that 'Love and fellowship maintained friendship between rivals, and beauty taught the beholders chastity,' wo! wo! to one of the guileless proud gipsies of ruined Barne-elms, to Master Yorke's reverend grey hairs, to Cicely's pure, tender sister-heart.

CHAPTER X.

THE MUMMERS.

THE year was at its close; the world was on its march, and what events were clustering then round its halting places?—events which we speak of yet with lightening eyes and bated breath—names which we utter still with eager tongues. The seeds of those fruits were fast germinating in the Yorke's time—those great 'household words' were dawning on the wide horizon—those tragedies, those triumphs were advancing through plot and perjury, blundering and bigotry, to their consummation. Mary was standing before the high altar of Holyrood beside 'the long lad' Darnley—and there was but a step thence to Kirk-of-Fields. Young Francis Drake, and Captain John, in the little *Judith*, and the *Minion*, were sailing as merchantmen to San Juan D'Onaro—to wend their way home, maddened with the perfidy of the Spaniard, the loss of their merry men, few to return from the pathless forests of the West, the Red In-

dians, the Spanish mines, the dungeons of the Inquisition, after fifteen years and upwards, to gladden kindred eyes long despairing in the good town of Plymouth. Elizabeth was to appear at Tilbury on her noble charger, with a general's truncheon in her hand, a corselet of polished steel on her brave breast, a page in attendance bearing her white plumed helmet. Elizabeth was to ride bare-headed from rank to rank, and, amid loving plaudits and deafening shouts of martial ardour, tell her people that she had a king's heart in her bosom, and 'thought it foul scorn that Parma, or Spain, or any other prince in Europe should dare to invade the borders of her realms,' and 'that she had always so behaved herself that under God she had placed her chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of her subjects;'—and Drake in the *Revenge*, Hawkins in the *Victory*, Sir Martin Frobisher in the little *Triumph* which fought for hours single-handed three great Spanish galleons, and Lord Howard of Effingham in the *Royal Ark*, showed whether they heeded such words borne to them on the breeze, or loved their English land—ay or no.

And Elizabeth was not content with being drawn by her white horses in her gilded chariot, under her gorgeous canopy, when the streets of London were all hung with blue in honour of her victorious seamen, to offer thanksgiving in St. Paul's, but struck among her classic medals the one with the inscrip-

tion, 'He blew with His wind, and they were scattered.'

And rest you, there were minor data for ordinary people. In the fields near Norwich an army of mice appeared, and ate the grass to the roots, until destroyed by flocks of strange-painted owls. The ruff, losing all modesty and reason, swelled and puffed into wings; starch was introduced by Mistress Vander Plasse, not only white, but red, blue, and purple; 'the underpropper,' 'a device made of wire, and crested for the purpose, and whipped all over either with gold thread, silver, or silk,' in ringlets, was invented, and on it erected 'the stately arches of pride,' until the nation arrived at 'the master devil ruff,' rich beyond measure in gold, silver, or silk lace, and which sparkled all over with suns, moons, and stars, and other devices, like the hieroglyphical belt which gave the title to Belted Will, or the false word 'Glück,' engraven on the russet armour worn by King Hal on the event of his marriage with stately and gentle Catherine of Arragon.

A portion of these annals did not sprout till the youngest Yorke was middle-aged; others were already in blossom—but, anyhow, it was Christmas which Catholics and Protestants united in willing merry—and even Nan Yorke was carried away with it out of her moping and midsummer folly, perhaps the more so that Sir Hugolin held his holiday with some fellows in the town of Cambridge, which, by

the way, was not altogether resigned to 'divine philosophy' and ecclesiastical wisdom, but showed at festive seasons a pretty sprinkling of court gentry, town heiresses, bluff squires, roystering soldiers, dainty dames, and clamorous body-servants.

In great halls and courts the Yule log was dragged home with tuck of drum and blast of trumpet. On groaning tables the boar's head was throned—

> The boar's head in hand bring I,
> With garlands gay and rosemary;
> I pray you all sing merrily,
> *Qui estis in convivio.*
>
> Be glad, lords, both more and lesse,
> For this hath ordained our stewárd,
> To cheer you all this Christmasse,
> The boar's head with mustard.

In the inns of court after dinner they had the play (one year it was 'Twelfth Night'—William Shakspere possibly marshalling the players—as recorded in the diary of John Manningham)—then the carols—then the judges and benchers led the dance round the sea-coal fire in the centre of the hall, escorted by the master of the revels, elected on Hallowe'en—or they hunted the cat and fox round the room with ten pairs of hounds.

The Yorkes were a poor household, and their log, though it crackled and sparkled with the best, was more of a homely, domestic log, like that of Herrick's:

> Come, bring with a noise,
> My merry, merry boys,

The Christmas-log to the firing;
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your hearts' desiring.
With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psalteries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-teending.
Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here,
The while the meat is a-shredding,
For the rare mincepie,
And the plums stand by,
To fill the paste that's a-kneading.*

The Yorkes had slaughtered their fatlings, their wort was steeped, their must strained, and as they were old-fashioned folks, their mead had been drawn off as well as their hot Rhenish wines. Cicely and Nan had rolled their brawn, baked their goose-pies, roasted their turkeys and capons, stirred their macaroon puddings, befloured their dumplings, hardened their sugar-balls—without being beholden to a Portingal, and boiled the hackin or great sausage, without exposing a lazy cook-maid to be taken by the arms, and run by the young men round courtyard or market-place, if she failed in the ceremony. They had feasted rich and poor of their narrow world; had carried the wassail-bowl, spiced to the turn of a nutmeg, to high and low, and seen its dregs drunk by Ned, Gil's boy, who had never

* Charles Knight's *Old England.*

heard of Hebe, and so of course could not compare the blithe young mistresses to Jove's cup-bearer. They had eaten their cakes, and Puritans though they were, sung their carols devoutly, and hung up their holly and mistletoe, and kissed Master Yorke—these two buxom daughters of his, both at a time, at an advantage in his own old hall, and played their games (Master Yorke was specially tolerant of games), tick-tack, pen-and-inkhorn—Sir Jan, hot cockles, riddles, catches, purposes. At last, somewhat wearied of their glee, they sat round the one great fire, the other dying out in red embers, Gil and Grizel not banished to the opposite chimney corner, but included in the ring.

A corner of the long table was within the circle, and on it a dish of chesnuts for roasting, a gorge or white stoneware pitcher with drinking-horns, Master Yorke's own cream-coloured jug shaped like a coffee-pot, divided into compartments, adorned with the deities of the mythology, and containing burnt sack or else bastard, and his silver tankard, and several tigs or drinking cups with two or three handles, and Gil's mug which he cared for exceedingly, because it was brought from Nürnberg, and moulded into the exact similitude of a bushy-tailed squirrel.

'Pity me!' Grizel would whisper, 'Gil sits muffing and mumping over that piece of pottery, like any clocking hen, but aint it a wonderful monster for fingers to press?'

Cicely, who was the singer when Nan was indis-

posed, had sung in her sweet, full voice, unsupported by prick-song, cythern, or rebatoe, a little madrigal, and then a verse or two of Gascoigne's Lullaby, giving quite pathetically the lines—

> With lullaby then youth be still,
> With lullaby content thy will;
> Since courage quails, and comes behind,
> Go sleep—and so beguile thy mind.

Nan was very restless at first, but when she could not put Cicely out of tune, she e'en took her advice, over literally, stretched out her arched, taper feet, dropped the silken thread she was spinning, crossed her hands before her, and doggedly went to sleep in the winking blaze, and soothing, caressing, vanquishing heat of the fire.

Grizel was spinning the new tree wool from foreign parts for vermilions and dimities; and Gil was mending coulters and manufacturing scythe-handles in the corner, where the shadow fell: and Cicely sat next her father—while he leant back in his great chair as he loved, and while she busied her fingers with her caul-work talked to him, like the good, duteous daughter, the thoughtful, intelligent soul she was.

They talked as we do to-day of the signs of the times which wore down even to country granges; the monopolies, how the Leather Company stood out against their share, and a member of Parliament asked in the House if bread was on the list, as they were fast coming to that pass, how that

upon inns fell equally hard upon mine host and his travellers, and how one upon aniseed, that comfortable cordial of homely folk and women who could not afford or abide wines, had just been imposed. They discussed the ships to be fitted out by the Merchant Adventurers and the Merchants of the Staple. They touched upon the fashionable gossip that Anne, Duchess dowager of Somerset, descended from the Plantagenets, had married again with an obscure person of the name of Newdegate; and Frances, Duchess dowager of Suffolk, and granddaughter to Henry VII., had also allied herself contemptibly with one Stoke—a fellow of insignificant position and mean descent; and when Elizabeth exclaimed of the last with surprise and indignation, 'What! hath she wedded her horsekeeper?' Cecil had the hardihood to reply, 'Yes, madam; and she says your Majesty would like to do so too;' and what a crying mercy it was that my Lord of Leicester (as Lord Robert had been created) was a good Protestant. They spoke of the wild weather, how the wind had thrown down more stones in the old dovecot; and they wandered away to other storms—to the great catastrophe when St. Powle's was struck with lightning, and its tower destroyed —an accident which the Papists attributed to God's judgment on the discontinuance of matins and vespers; and Pilkington, my Lord Bishop of Durham, who preached afterwards at St. Powle's Cross, declared a punishment on the sins of London in

general, and the abuse of the cathedral in particular, as 'from the top of the spire on coronations or other solemn triumphs, some for vainglory had used to throw themselves down by the rope, and so killed themselves vainly to please other men's eyes. At the battlements of the tower sundry times were used their Popish anthems. In the top of one of the pinnacles was Lollard's Tower, where many an innocent soul had been by them cruelly tormented and murdered. Their images hung on every wall, pillar, and door, with their pilgrimages and worshippings of them, passing over their massing and many altars, and the rest of their Popish service. The south alley was for usury and Popery, the north for simony, and the horse fair in the midst for all kinds of bargains, meetings, brawlings, murders, and conspiracies.' 'Indeed,' Master Yorke added, 'Powle's Walk was at best a common Change and ordinary.' Then Master Yorke diverged to the character and attainments of the Bishop of Durham—a good man, a proper good man, who had seen enough of trouble and exile, but a thought wafted along by the wind of party violence, aided and abetted by Whittingham, who had been a friend of Master Knox, and a member of the oppressed congregation of Frankfort when Cox brought in the Liturgy; and now the tables being turned, Whittingham, as Master Yorke was well avised, had lifted the stone coffins of the Priors of Durham, and turned them into troughs for horses and dogs

besides using the holy-water stones, 'very curiously made, and bossed with outside bosses,' in his kitchen as vessels wherein to steep beef and stock-fish, which Master Yorke considered a scurvy reprisal, if not a gross violation of decency in morals and religion.

Anon Master Yorke mused aloud on what he doubted were the misdoings of his sect. He would fain reverence the Lord's-day, but he could not away with the proclamation in Somerset, that 'to throw a bowl on the Lord's-day was as great a sin as to kill a man;' far less stomach that in Norfolk, 'to make a feast or dress a wedding dinner on the same was as great a sin as for a father to take a knife and cut his child's throat.' He could not, an' he were not of those who would bind on other men's shoulders burdens grievous to be borne, which they would not stir their little fingers to raise, agree with the Consistory in condemning a man to imprisonment for the matter of reading *Amadis de Gaul;* and he did sorrow with a grievous sorrow for the great French scholar Chatillon, or Castalio, of whose change of name he could relate such a story as would make Cicely open her bright eyes wide, whose luxury was a piece of black bread steeped in milk, who was the favourite of Melancthon, and who gave Calvin himself lessons in languages and botany; and, moreover, who volunteered into the pest-house of Geneva when its inmates were dying by hundreds in a day; and who, on account of his unhappy con-

tradiction of the Canticles, was opposed by Calvin with fury, taunted as a cabalist and alchemist, and had cast in his teeth the fact of having fished wood out of the Rhine to burn for the warming of himself and children, and was hunted down until he perished of starvation. Master Yorke could better forgive the burning of Servetus, that scholar of vast attainments, but impious denier of the Trinity, profane and ruthless tamperer with Scripture, and trafficker in science, and dastardly supplicant for the mercy already denied him.

'Nay but, father, can such deeds be done in the name of the Gospel and the Lamb of God?' cried Cicely Yorke, appalled.

Master Yorke was disturbed; he had shaken the faith of his daughter, and how was he to convince her, as life had taught him, that good and evil stand side by side in all human institutions; and that it is not the immaculate Church or man that we are to follow and work with here below, but the least erring with the arch-enemy—the most labouring with the holy Lord. How was he, vain sophist and carper, to prove to the young woman, with her feet nearing the cisterns—the broken, but fair cisterns that hold no water—that if the Puritans and their leaders had sinned, they were as the green boughs, and when judgment began with them, where should the ungodly and the sinner appear? For the many in the world without, full of Popish superstition, and craft, and earthly lust and wantonness, were as

the ungodly, compared with the lofty, zealous, austere Puritans. It was false that they were the Pharisees. What widows' houses had they devoured? What uppermost seats had they taken—save in the name and for the sake of church discipline? Whose riches did they covet? Who dared term them—but now the martyrs—hypocrites?

'Cicely, child, you do not understand; as in letters there are to be found 'the fleering frump,' 'the broad flout,' and 'the privy nip,' and men but rule the more soberly, and write the more correctly, for being so sharply handled—so in morals, to be too precise, is, without question, to err on the safe side. God save the mark, Cicely, though I seem to be contradicting myself, could she be a woman worth lamenting who was so far left to herself as to sing profane songs to psalm-tunes, and was banished thereby?'

'My mind misgives me, father, she was some light, bold piece, who wished to buy notoriety even by an offence, and that was the whole.'

'Why, then, she only had her desire; and if not, why did she provoke the authorities, daughter Cicely? No good cometh of contumacy, and no worthy, modest soul will fall into that snare.' (At this rate, doubtless, Master Yorke would have earnestly assured my Lord Hunsdon, when he gravely complained in council of the Queen's pinching his wife, that the probability was the sufferer deserved the chastisement; and would have coolly comforted the aggrieved

maid of honour—that lovely Mistress Bridges—by the information that she had fairly earned snubbing and beating, when she would flirt with insolent young Essex against royal prohibition; at least he could have pointed the moral with the fact, that Elizabeth had a kindly regard for her rough soldier cousin, and that dearly stout Hunsdon, in his heart, loved his Queen—even as that other cousin, the great admiral, another of the would-be hostile kinsmen, bore her in his arms to her last bed, fed her as a mother feeds her little one, with the hot tears hailing down his brown cheeks the while; and Mrs. Bridges —why, incorrigible Mrs. Bridges had much better not have meddled with forbidden fruit when she trifled with the admiration of inflammable, unstable Essex.)

'And that vain, flaunting matron, who went to church of a Sunday with her hair in longer curls than was accounted decorous by the statute, and was locked up in discreet and profitable durance along with her companions and the person who dressed her hair. Wherefore did she wear her ornament so as to make it a scandal—tell me that, Cicely?'

'Father!' exclaimed Cicely, demurely, 'you would not suffer Master Dyer to clip our locks;' and she poised her shapely hand on the crown of her raven tire-valiant.

'But I would have you pay heed to this,' demonstrated Master Yorke, hastily, retreating basely from

his usual position; 'the Apostle Paul noticed the plaiting of hair in his day, and gave it not his commendation.'

'It was only to exalt a higher adornment, that the less might give place to the greater—it was to teach us proportions, was it not, good sir?'

'I believe you are right, lass.'

'And, father, you know you affect my net with the white roses.'

'Ah! wench, that was because your poor mother wore it the night I first saw her at Cherry-hinton, when she was simple enough to prefer a poor scholar to a rich sheriff. Heigh-ho!'

'She was right there,' cried Cicely, warmly; 'a scholar is worth a power of men.' Then she grew hot, red, and silent, and thinking, with a flash of recollection of Maid Julian, and the fond devotion of the unlicked cub, Ralph of Ferntower, she sighed sorely with contrition as well as bashfulness.

Her father, too, corrected her modestly—'I know not that, lass; I know not that they are well met—these scholars, though they prove neither men of straw nor men of ice. But about that gay Genevese dame, Cicely, now I warrant she sported not her scented tresses in the course of obeying her husband, ruling her household, and rearing her children.'

'I doubt it; yea, I doubt it,' laughed Cicely, 'save that she may but have been saucy, which we know is less than malcontent—a lush but sweet nature which, though it could not have been cribbed by

men's rules, might have grown to God. You shake your head; nay, I have no great will to defend her, and I grant that the very smallness of her fault, committed against such authority, at such cost, to her own disparagement, the discomfiture of her family, and the injury of meaner persons, is her condemnation, and reduces her to a level with the profane singer.'

'Right again, Cicely; and if any weak-minded man or woman should e'er accuse Calvin of harshness in the matter of women, do thou reply that Ignatius Loyola, Knight of the Virgin Mary, and brother of the Society of Jesus, formally excluded women from his order, and i'faith that was the severe and stinging award.'

'What, father!' exclaimed Cicely in amazement, 'dost expect that any gospeller, any reformer, will ever come to halt between the merits and demerits of Loyola the Jesuit and Johannes Calvin?'

'I fear me there is, and there will be confusion in natures and names, alternating with slavery,' deplored Master Yorke, relapsing into despondency, which was rare with him. 'We have no right to look for aught else; we cannot hold ourselves guiltless. How many of us judge fairly, and on what grounds do we base our conclusions? On the evidence of St. Augustine, or Xavier, just deceased in the Chinese empire? I trow not; and as we deal with parties, so others will deal with individuals, and amongst them with Johannes Calvin, that lion-

like man, who laboured mightily in the flesh, and was heartily willing to lose his life for the truth's sake.'

'Thou didst know him thyself, father,' suggested Cicely, pausing in her work in respectful interest and admiration.

'I knew him, daughter, to my profit and to my shame, for never could I have gone and done likewise. Tell me not that it was not needed; the Lord appoints the work, each man may work in his own province. But Johannes Calvin was like the Italian painter and sculptor, Michael Angelo, who at seventy years of age did the work of six men. I saw Calvin at Geneva, when he was bullied by the jests of the wild young nobles who composed the society of the Artichoke, and threatened by the deadly animosity of the Eidgenoss. I knew him again at Strasburgh, a spare man, 'colourless as a corpse,' who wrote to ask after a wife to nurse him, and was strong enough to marry a poor converted Baptist's widow (in his own words, 'a rare woman'), with a family of children by her first husband, whom he reared and provided for in all respects as his own; verily, never weary nor weak in his work! I have lived to have news of his death. At the last his fortune was very moderate, his wants very few. 'I am dying; I can do no more,' was his last speech in council, and there spake the hero. He was carried to church to receive the last communion from no less a hand than Beza's. 'You know that I am by nature weak and timid, yet

by his aid I have overcome all enemies without and within,'—there spoke the saint. Farel, his old fellow-workman, dwarfed and deformed in person, a sorry carcass for a soaring spirit, in his infirmities travelled many a mile on foot to bid him a last farewell. On Whitsun eve the ministers of Geneva supped together, and Calvin was borne into the room. 'Be comforted, my brethren; a wall will not prevent my spirit from being in communion with yours,'—and there yearned the strong heart that men at their own charges had slandered as self-contained and stony. Daughter Cicely,' ended Master Yorke, with simple impressiveness, 'I appeal to thee, died Abner as a fool dieth?'

Cicely burst out in eager negative, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'

As Master Yorke and Cicely were inclined to prolong their serious discourse by a fitting meditation, they were comically disturbed and startled by a little gruff sniff from Nan, sleeping pragmatically under their noses.

'That child hath a want of relish for grave matters—which is worse than a want of manners,' reflected Master Yorke, a little testily.

Cicely defended Nan incontinently, with a pretty show of spirit: 'She hath been duly catechised by Master Dyer, sir, and she answered more pat to the words than I could e'er attain.'

'Yea, verily, no exercise on the spirit to disturb

the laying up and giving forth of the letter; I understand that capacity. At the same time I admit there are those who can only receive the milk of the word, whose frail stomachs are revolted and diseased by solid meat.'

'If Johannes Calvin himself had baked and toasted, and run here and there, and hung o'er a scorching fire, as Nan hath done this day,' persisted Cicely, with her intrepid affection, 'he might have winked of an even likewise.'

'Not he, Cicely; I tell you he was not acquainted with lukewarmness, and ah! carnal cates, Cicely, sensual gratifications,' protested Master Yorke, when at that moment such a thundering knock came to the hall-door as not only awoke Nan in a second, but would have startled the Seven Sleepers.

'Good lack! is Cambridge town a-fire!' 'Hath the townsfolks risen for another dinner?' 'Are the Papists abroad?' 'Are the Queen's pursuivants at the door?' cried one and another in the greatest disorder, till old Goody Grizel, reconnoitring through the slit into the porch, cut a caper in the sight of them all, and proclaimed with the zest of fifteen, 'Why, what should it be, honest folks, but the mummers? We had the morrice-dancers, with pipe and tabor, and white kerchief in the right hand, this day se'nnight; now here be a goodly company of mummers, disguised in all shapes.'

The announcement was received with the alacrity with which a quiet life welcomes its periodical diver-

sions and outlets. Gil exerted himself to fling open the hall-door, Master Yorke straightened himself to inspect the various characters, and pronounce upon their merits. Cicely fell back into the shade of his chair, where she stood looking forth right graciously and willingly; but Nan kept her post in the middle of the floor, her eyes shining, her cheeks flushing with delight, terrified lest she should lose a particle of the play, and ready rather to be accosted and wheeled about by the performers.

The first detachment of the revellers were very formidable. They entered in the guise of half a score of brown bears and white bears, rearing, and growling horribly; but Nan only laughed the louder and shook their paws, stretched out to hug her—while Cicely, as far behind Nan in physical insensibility as she was before her in moral courage and endurance, was foolish enough to grow pale, and shrink in her corner—to the degree that a compassionate masquer, merely muffled head and body in the common long cloak, who had entered with the others, perceptibly pushed and shoved his way until he could stand like a statue between her and the riot which followed the irruption and invasion of the wild beasts, who disported themselves in a way not even to be expected from their untamed instincts, not only ferociously attacking every individual present, with the exception of Master Yorke, whom by a miraculous consideration they spared, but climbing up the stairs, racing along the gallery, snuffing with their noses

upon shelves and into cupboards, and switching with their tails amongst the trenchers. At last, while Master Yorke preserved the most commendable placidity, and only affably exclaimed now and then, 'Finely freshed, Bruin!' 'Excellently well kept up, my doughty quadrupeds!' the beasts, leaving off their gambols, gathered into a tremendous phalanx not far from Nan, and stood comparatively still—but that one of them, amid encoring roars, seized upon the squirrel in Gil's Nürnberg mug, poured the contents down his throat, and so far from being discomposed by the unnatural draught, tossed the empty vessel gleefully in air, and was only prevented from further pranks by being bravely collared by Gil in silence, and deprived of his treasure—while the company waited a fresh arrival.

The second act was soon heralded by the beating of a drum, whose rub-a-dub sounded lustily in the night, and was supported by the music of cornets and sackbuts; a motley band of a score or more marched in, hung about by an inferior crowd of link-bearers, chain-holders, and mere spectators stretching out into the dark chase.

In the front rank appeared representatives of all the leading personages of the day—soldiers with the morions, Almayne rivets and pikes, still used by Elizabeth's trainbands; fat, rosy monks, in petticoats with ropen girdles, still begging in a drawling whine the abolished Peter's pence; lean Puritan divines, in cloak and skull-cap, snuffling their ex-

hortations, and snarling at their rivals; Solicitor-General Bromley in his robes of office, laying down the law; Derricke leading a rogue to pillory; a trader with his flat cap and his pouch discounting moneys; a scrivener in his grogram, with his ink-horn instead of scrip, recording a case in point; a gay, tripping, feathered gallant, with white shoe-ties, like Dick the courtier; a beggar with his wallet asking broken bread; a sailor in his blue jacket, smacking of salt-water, dancing a hornpipe on land; and last, not least, a salvage man, fresh from those trackless wastes of gorgeous woods in which men sought the Eldorado, staring in wonderment at the civilization of merry England. After these came Italian cavalieri and French messieurs in short cloaks over one shoulder, and steeple-crowned hats, Dutchmen in the pink of trunk hose, Spanish dons in longest mantles and stiffest ruffs, and closing the files, three and three, plain men in Lincoln green, with wreaths of holly on their bare heads, as on May-day they walked crowned with primroses.

The most of the party wore their natural faces, so that an adept like Goody Grizel could scream in a moment—'There goes Simon of Barnsley; he hath gotten a pair of spectacles, so he always does the pedagogue.' 'Stay! is not that Mall Yeaman's son? Bless the boy! he's too plump and ruddy to look the parson, and every one knows he seeks to be a pricker and ranger.' 'My stars! what a withered apple-john Wat the butcher has grown.' Others had

rendered themselves more outlandish by smearing their faces with red and white paint, corking their eyebrows in the most grotesque fashion, assuming false beards curling down to their gaberdines, and putty noses of gigantic dimensions banded across their distanced cheeks. Amongst the last the salvage man, in a jerkin of panther's skin, with jay's and peacock's feathers and quills stuck through his knotted hair, real mocassins on his feet, leaning on his hunting-spear, was stained and tatooed in every direction.

The salvage man led this strange host, who, suddenly relinquishing their various trades which they had been pushing briskly—the countryman with his spade, the carpenter with his awl, the sailor with his cat-o'-nine-tails—gallantly made common cause in an attack on the bears, ready to receive them, sitting on their haunches, preparing to spring, and exposing every one his white tusks.

It was manifest to some of the on-lookers that the salvage man received an impression at the sight of the young gamesome beauty, Nan Yorke. He started aside in his career to lead her out of the way, as if he were careful of treading on her toes, cumbered as he felt himself with his unruly, unmatched followers; but yet he fought with his back towards her, and never once looked behind him, through the whole of the battle or at its conclusion—conduct which ruffled and bewildered Nan, accustomed on such stray occurrents to studious and exaggerated

homage—above all from the notables of the night, like enough to be strangers of degree.

The tug between man and brute was sustained with great spirit, and the wrestling very fair—some of the couples falling to the ground and rolling over and over—in one case to the bursting of the skin and the display of a shock head, a dirty crimson doublet, and a quarter-staff, a forbidden weapon, and hailed half with jibes and laughter, half with volleys of 'shame,' 'shame,' all from the bowels of a bear; in another to a collision with a torch, and the instantaneous dispersion of a shower of fiery sparks, and had it not been for a bucket of water close at hand, there might have been a general ignition and conflagration as woful as that of the disguisement which destroyed the tottering reason of the poor hairbrained King of France.

The encounter ended with the defeat of the bears, their crestfallen consent to dance a Miller's Round with their triumphant foes, their consignment to chains and keepers, and their being marshalled by the salvage man past Master Yorke and his daughters, to whom they did uncouth obeisance, acknowledged with stately courtesy. Then having played out their exciting and mirth-provoking play, the salvage man, in name of his associates, and in good English, delivered a magniloquent speech, describing the regions he had quitted—the great rivers, the deep forests, the oranges as big as a man's head, and grapes, each berry equal to his fist, the lions

fiercer than their brother baited by the English mastiffs at Warwick, the unicorns fleeter than that which fought for the crown, the flying squirrels, the chattering monkeys, and the huts of palm-boughs and leaves, each containing a corner heaped up with ruddy gold or frosted silver; yet in his comparison of his native country with this new land of England, this land of tall ships, brave soldiers, learned sages, fair women—fair as Angelica, the Queen of hearts—taking care always to yield precedence to England; and finished by demanding boldly of Master Yorke, if in their struggle with the bestial denizens of the other world he and his newly-found brethren had not done their duty, and whether, therefore, he did not hold them entitled to a share in his Christmas cheer.

'Gallantly merited, heartily welcome,' declared Master Yorke; and he added presently—'however, I ought to know that voice, barbarian and paynim though it proclaim itself. Not so spake the wild men whom I once saw in the train of the gallant mariners wending their way to the palace of Westminster.'

'Of a truth you know the voice,' cried the salvage man, throwing himself into a fresh posture, speaking with hot haste, and lifting and shaking his finger to give emphasis to his words. 'Am I not, in veritas, the son of thy quondam crony, Dr. Barlowe, neither Sylvanus nor Indian, but Harry Barlowe, a graceless dog to be the heir of a venerable bookman like yourself, my master, but enow overcome by your

too kind remembrance to confess my disguise, and, in fine, unbosom myself an hour too soon.'

Master Yorke received the explanation rather awkwardly, considering his previous frankness—he coughed, stared, and fidgeted, but he ordered out crisp cakes, big fragments of pasty, lumbering ends of sirloins, last slices of rounds, a cask of October, and a little runlet of sherris, and bade his guests be filled and refreshed, like an open-hearted, generous country gentleman whose fortunes were broken, but who could not be stingy an he would.

It was now matter of suspicion that the late salvage man, and professed Harry Barlowe, was disposed to hurry the feast to the best of his power, and he distinctly and downrightly refused to order the expedition in its further progress, on the plea of a word to speak with his ancient friend, Master Yorke; although he had some difficulty in stilling the clamorous opposition which his secession roused, the 'Heyday, a kestrel for a falcon!' 'A deserter in our ranks!' 'Beshrew thee, loon, wouldst leave us in the lurch?' from the late joyous, but now discontented revellers; to which he made angry retort, 'I only engaged to be your spokesman and salvage man as far as Barne-elms—let the mean extortioner that would drag me on against my will, stand forth.'

Then occurred what was one of the most unaccountable incidents of the evening. All of a sudden Nan set up a great laugh, so loud and prolonged

that it fell off into hysterical crying; and Master Barlowe, in place of composing this flutter of spirits or assisting Grizel who averred that the child was overdone, and would have burnt feathers stuffed below her nose, drew hastily back towards Cicely, and took her hand; whereupon Cicely's guard, the cloaked masquer, with an angry rustle strode out after the departing players; and Cicely awoke from a dream, shivering; and in truth it seemed as if the mumming at Barne-elms, like many another mumming in this world, was to end in very real mystification and misery.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FLIGHT.

AFTER Dick Yorke had plunged his face in a second convenient bucketful of spring water, and stripped off his skin coat, and stood out in his plainest jacket, he advanced quickly, knelt down before his uncle's chair, and craved his forgiveness.

'How now, Dick? Dost take me for such a choleric fool, that because thou hast conducted a frolic indifferently well, and attempted to prolong the madness just one whit more than was possible, thou must needs beg my pardon with mock solemnity. I was only a little grave, lest thou shouldst have a reason for thy waggish concealment—a scrape in the background.'

'And so there is, uncle,' Dick owned, very penitently.

'Well, Dick, I am grieved for thy sake, and a little disappointed for my own. You see I held thee neither prodigal nor brawler, but one whom I could

ask to give a look to my poor lasses when I was gone,' observed Master Yorke, mildly.

'Oh, uncle, uncle! I have ruined thee,' cried out Dick, the tears gathering thick in his Yorke's brown eyes.

'My lad, not so bad as that; and true it is if thou hast not principle and wit to employ on thine own score, it were rank selfishness and folly in me to expect thee to show thyself a wiseacre only to serve me.'

'Thou dost not know; Nan and Cicely will never again wish me well.'

'Tut! leave off thy dark parables. An old head was never found on young shoulders; who would expect the ripe ear on the green blade? Hast broken into a dove-cot? Thou canst not have done aught to shame a man, youngster.'

'Not so low as that,' protested Dick, rising slowly, 'but I had rather have lost my right hand. I have fallen under the Queen's displeasure, and oh, it is heavy to say it, you are concerned in the offence.'

'What! I, Dick!' exclaimed the old man, incredulously; 'it cannot be. I have been always a loyal subject; even when the question was of Lady Jane and the reformed doctrines, I abode with Hooper for Princess Mary, judging that no good could be the issue of treason; the more's the pity that Mary sought not submission, but apostasy. But this lady, the Queen's grace, the defender of Protestantism

throughout Europe, wherein can I have wronged her in my lightest thought? I travelled to greet her once, when she was taken back into Oxfordshire, after refusing the hand of the Duke of Savoy, when Bedingfield commanded the village bell-ringers to be set in stocks for doing her honour, and Lord Williams refused to dismiss the nobility and gentry who had come to pay her their respects, telling Bedingfield to his face, 'that her Grace might and should be merry in his poor house of Ricot.' With some others of her loving subjects, I was fain to prove my respect for her brave heart, and her fidelity to the good cause, and knowing her to be a lady of fine parts and commendable knowledge, I offered her, among the other gifts of gold-pieces and jewels, attire and furniture, perfumes and comfits, my best copy of Horace, to cheer her spirit—the which she accepted kindly, with a sweet smile and an apt speech in Latin, wherein only one clause was in fault, the whole given in a most pleasant voice. I counted her a very fair and goodly woman, and like to be a great gift from Providence to this distracted kingdom. I have never had word of her since, but I have listened to the echo of her renown, and rejoiced in her bounty to art and science more than all that have gone before her; and I have had my dreams more by token when she visited our Cambridge of late season, whether she would care to recognise an old scholar, and give him her hand to kiss. In all this, Dick, there is no lese-majesty.'

'Alas! sir, it needeth but an evil report; the justest ears may be abused by talebearers and liars.'

'But the charge, Dick, the unconscionable fustian charge, thou Knight of the Post!' and still the old man smiled in the slowness of innocence.

At last Dick reluctantly descended to particulars. 'You have heard of my Lord Arundel's disgrace; how he hath been in durance in his own lodgings, and all access to him forbidden? Well, a person whom it listeth not to name prayed me to carry a billet to him on urgent business. I rashly undertook the commission, seeing not how I could decline it with honour, as if I feared the risk, or evaded a deed of some difficulty and danger. To blindfold those who were set to watch all suspected of intercourse with the Earl, I carried the letter into the country the last time that I was here—for this affair happened months ago. Now, my Lord Arundel hath gone abroad by permission, but without ridding himself of the treasonable suspicions against him, which have rather been revived of late, and accomplices drawn in, whose committal and condemnation would widow England, and cause sorrow to all true hearts. That letter, by some overlook of the Earl's, was left behind him, has been traced and used by his enemies, and the enemies of more than him, or of a simple fellow like me. The paper bore no name of any writer, but by another mischance—they are so careless, those great folks, uncle—the bearer was set down in full, and I am denounced, and in hourly

danger of being arrested on a charge of misprision and conspiracy; and as I care not to give up my employer, or to be stretched on the rack, or to spend a dozen of my best years in the Tower, I must flee the country for my liberty, if not for my life.'

'Sorrow comes unawares, but sooner it than sin. An unlucky, uncomely hap, too, Dick. I am cut up to hear on't.'

'But that is not the worst,' groaned Dick; 'have patience with me, good my uncle, cry not out upon me, Cicely, nor—nor Nan, my heart is broken to tell it, I will never be the light lad I have been; and I would but have done you kindness for all that I owed you,' pled Dick, in passionate distress; 'but thou art involved, Master Yorke; I have it on sure authority, thou art a marked man; the officers will be here with search-warrants within two days' time, and, hark in thine ear, uncle, the rack to those who will not confess their knowledge of a plot they are as ignorant of as my pale cousins there. Thou must rouse thyself, honoured kinsman; send Cicely and Nan to some place of safety, shut up thy house, and go with me, while there is still space to escape by. Perhaps the falsehood will blow over, perhaps the hour will come, ere we think, when a powerful voice will dare rise in our behalf; but we cannot run the risk of an examination.'

'I am too old to travel again, Dick,' said Master Yorke, wearily, while his daughters broke out into frightened sobs and cries. 'When I was young,

and an exile before, man, it was for the reformed doctrines. Am I now to hide my grey hairs in company with a Catholic lord? Am I to suffer for both causes? Pooh! Dick, it is folly.'

'I cannot help it, sir; such folly hath cost heads ere now. Oh, sir, bring not upon thy brother's child the corroding stain of a kinsman and a benefactor's blood.'

'Oh, father, father, hear him, and leave us,' urged Cicely and Nan.

'Murder! murder! the persecuting villains. Woe's me, that the master should be in trouble again, and my mistresses, my sweet hearts, my children robbed and forsaken,' cried old Grizel, madly; while Gil stood ready to shoulder broom, or bow, or pitchfork in their service, without more ado.

'His Grace of Norfolk's first wife was Mary of Arundel,' observed Master Yorke, recovering his habits of observation and penetration.

'Do not ask me,' begged poor Dick, sorrowfully, flinging himself down on a settle, and laying his aching head on his arms; 'yet why should I conceal what was his chief benefit and blessing? Since the Duke hath lost his truest love and best partner—that soft heart and sagacious mind—he hath not flourished as formerly. Since then he hath had the widow of Lord Henry Dudley, and the widow of Lord Dacre, and hath survived them all. God forbid he should venture on matrimony a fourth time; for it would be clean wedding in the face of Providence.'

'I have ever heard tell of Norfolk that he was a magnanimous and affable gentleman,' mused Master Yorke.

'A most princely gentleman,' assented Dick, hastily, 'and greatly given to taking counsel—too much so, as some deem; for with his lofty estate and his unsuspicious temper the custom may render him a tool in the hands of evilly-disposed persons.'

'His rank is not so perilously high,' argued Master Yorke.

'His father, Surrey, died for using the arms of Edward the Confessor, and, as some say, for too close an affection for the Princess Mary,' remarked Dick, significantly.

'But the son doth not aspire overmuch to Elizabeth,' persisted Master Yorke.

'Better it were so; I mean that before the Queen of Scots was disposed of,' Dick allowed them to wring from him, 'it was well known a great person declared that he looked high, but not high enough, and threatened that the block should spare him another bridal pillow.'

'It is written, "Put not thy faith in princes,"' said Master Yorke, gloomily.

'Nay,' exclaimed Dick, eagerly, flinging out his arm, and standing up proud and patriotic; 'it shall never be told of me that I lightlied for my own poor sufferings our Sovereign Lady, the greatest, the purest, the most pious governor in Christendom—the quintessence of all virtue and grace—the crown-

ing blessing of Almighty God to favoured England —thrice happy in her excellences, whatever besides be its trials from the envy of the wicked and the strife of nations. Was not the sprig of rosemary received from the poor woman at Fleet-bridge retained in her hold at Westminster? and it was a sceptre that became her white hand as well as e'er another. I have bathed in the summer lightning of her heavenly wit, tempered ever with goodness; and I have witnessed her whom all men adored, taking the sacrament behind her face cloth, confessing her sins penitently, and praying fervently for her people. Here I cry with all my strength, 'God bless Queen Elizabeth!' and I vow I will gasp that prayer with my last breath, come weal come woe.'

Marvellously noble the poor gallant looked in his disinterested, unswerving homage, and his high, fixed faith. It was to be seen that he had stood on the threshold of that chamber of chivalry entered by Sidney and Raleigh, by gentle Hatton, when he was 'desolated' at his absence from his mistress, and hardy Frobisher, when he expended his guilders on ships to fight her battles on the sea; he had breathed a foretaste of the air which braced and exhilarated heroes.

Master Yorke's spirit rang in unison with this loyalty, and he was quick to admit its intrinsic worth, and to atone for his passing infringement of its generosity.

'Well enunciated, Dick Yorke! 'Thou shalt not

speak evil of dignities,' and 'thou shalt render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's,' and, good sooth, here honour and praise are due. In these troublous times, we know twice over 'uneasy lies the head that wears the crown;' and we have greater reason to wonder at the manifold temptations which are resisted in the promotion of the common good, than at those slips which spill our own hopes. Yet, pest! Dick, I cannot think of so perfect a lady that she would be so far misled on so small a charge. She passed through the Traitor's Gate herself, once: ay, and she said as she set foot on the stairs, 'Here landeth as true a subject, being a prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs; and before thee, O God! I speak it, having no other friends but thee alone.' I am not without friends at court; there is my Lord Buckhurst, and there is Sir John Harrington.'

'Would to Heaven I might not mar thy trust,' cried Dick, his countenance falling as much as it had risen; 'but thou hast foes also, double-deep and pestilent foes. Sir Hugolin Botelier hath proffered an accusation against thee, of dealing in the black art and engaging in acts of necromancy, to which he hath been either eye or ear-witness.'

Nan clutched Cicely, and hid her face in her sister's gown, and Master Yorke was moved beyond control. 'The scurrilous bully!' he ejaculated; 'the Blackamoor—wholly!' driven into venomous epithets by the enormity of the wrong. 'I had no concern with him, save that he raised me moneys on a sound

bond, and I entertained him as a neighbour more than was becoming a gentleman; and once, at his own craving, I drew up, on his behoof, a scheme of the nativity of a mean man whom he suspected of pilfering from his empty cupboards and closets—every one as bare as my hand, save his own private store-room and buttery, a mass! the meat and drink does not stick in his grudging, raging throat. I must say I found no clue to offence or offender, though I followed the prescribed rules. I guessed the fellow was the author of his own misfortune. Let him do his worst; it will disparage me less than keeping company with the vile scum of the Irish plantations.'

'He boasted likewise,' (Dick gave tongue deliberately now, and not without a spice of gratified malice, but with a restrained fierceness also,) 'that if he pressed you hard, he would have his choice of either of your fair daughters at his own terms.'

'Ha! the fool,' exclaimed Master Yorke, passing from rage to contempt; 'he thought I valued them no higher than my books and instruments with which he might force me to part; my own flesh and blood—my sweet, kind wenches—their dead mother's legacy. Let there be drawn daggers between us, it could never come to that!'

There was no time to study ceremony and to dally on deeds—the distressed family were forced to act and to decide in a few hours their probable fortunes. Calamities came suddenly then—not accidents of the

present day—but arrests, flights, pursuivants, warrants, prisons, gyves, the cart-tail, or the curtal-axe. Ay, in the golden days of Bess, as well as the bloody reigns of Mary and Henry, for the Tudor blood was hot, and danger was on every side. Insurgents in the North, risings in the West, secret machinations, and criminal attempts everywhere; and statesmen and lawyers could not be too careful, too wary, never dreaming that their free and tranquil descendants would reckon them bloodthirsty, arbitrary, and childishly fearful.

'The fairest Buck in England' had little warning, when 'the Butcher's dog pulled him down erewhile.' And when the years had passed, and times changed with another royal favourite—when that wretched patent for sweet wine was withdrawn, and Elizabeth cried harshly, 'in order to manage an ungovernable beast, it is necessary to stint its provender,' oh, the wild beast had short breathing space—the reverse was sudden and complete, when Essex, lately the king of the London streets, was stopped at Ludgate by empty carts barricaded across the way with pikemen behind them, was shot twice through the hat, saw young Tracy slain, retreated into Friday-street, in his faintness begged for a draught of cold water, took boat, and returned like a hunted hare to Essex House where he was taken—and then, God wot, the arrogant head lay humbly enough on the low block.

Master Yorke must withdraw for a time from the

law's jurisdiction—at least, till he could establish his innocence as noonday, else there was little chance of aught more lenient than a dreary imprisonment in the Compter without the necessaries of life, and a confiscation; and there might be a sudden and violent death—a winding up of all difficulties, and an end of all troubles.

Master Yorke was too old to lie in the fens, so he agreed to depart on the morrow with Dick. He had experience in foreign refuges, was familiar with the Gueux of Holland and the Huguenots of France; he had sojourned in Augsburg, and Wittenberg, and Geneva—that Rome of Puritanism. There was the Palatine of Seradia, and the Emperor Rodolph, both great patrons of learning; and though he was loth to break up his family and resume his early wanderings, still that errant life, that visiting of strange cities, with their colleges and libraries, and receiving consideration and honour there—such as had been freely bestowed in Cambridge here on Martin Bucer and Paulus Fagius—that communication with their philosophers, and lodging with their homely learned printers, or splendid, illiterate, but inquisitive princes, was not so uncongenial to the old man as it might have been to one of narrow sympathies, and local tastes and habits. He mourned the loss of his daughters whom he proposed to dispatch, with break of day, to his aged cousin at Crossby, long separated from him in intercourse, but too near in blood to be wronged by the supposition that he would disown

kindred ties in the hour of need. And he sighed for his own peculiar library, the curious collection of his life, his rare editions, his new works, his copies with Day's mark of the rising sun, and his beloved motto, 'Arise, it is day'—his Arabic book, his perspective glass, his globes; but he had no leisure for lamentation or precaution—he could only trust that, like the similar riches of Mortlake, his treasures might be tossed aside, and scattered here and there, but not irrevocably lost, or annihilated.

The old man was stunned and carried away by the shock—as we still say on the occasion of a sudden death—he did not comprehend his misfortune, the worst was not come. Excitement acted upon him like generous wine; he made his preparations firmly and with dispatch; he talked of the lot imposed upon him in a moment, by no connivance or cognizance of his, composedly, and well-nigh with good heart; but when he was parted from his children for an indefinite period, when he was beyond the sea and past danger, when he stood in the streets of another kingdom's capital, when he sat down a guest at a stranger's table, or dark night came on, and roused him from his lonely researches, no home hearth, no honoured place, no free, light, loving voices, whose claims upon him he had never denied —that was the season when the grey head might sink, after the wind had passed over it, and was gone.

Now, while Cicely hung about Master Yorke in fond, uncomplaining despair, amid promises and

faint prognostics, pious injunctions, sudden endearments, he could relieve himself by telling her, sarcastically, but less bitterly than might have been, how the Cambridge students in his day had resolved on representing the 'Peace' of Aristophanes, and importuned an ingenious professor to devise the means of raising Trygœus, quaintly and pointedly, on the back of a huge brown beetle; and when the accomplished man succeeded, by his ability and labour, in effecting their purpose, they turned upon him, in base panic and shameless ingratitude, and drove him out of the University. But he lived to retaliate, Master Yorke concluded, almost with triumph; he returned from a foreign court, laden with distinction, and presented a pair of these very globes of Gerard Mercator to his insensate and degenerate college.

Grizel and Gil were of necessity released from their service, and it was piteous to listen to Grizel's wail, not over their destitution—for out of their slender wages off Master Yorke's diminished estate they had their savings, and they had a brother, a burly yeoman in Suffolk, who had long prayed them uselessly to lend him, a jolly bachelor, their company and their helping hands on his grange—but for the parting with her charges. 'I cannot abear it; 'deed I cannot. I never thought you'd have the heart to advise it; I could kiss and say good-bye to Gil for a term of years with only a stound, for look ye, he's a fox, my Gil, with his hundred and one strange

tricks; but my lambs, my lovely lambs, what will become of them?'

Cicely stayed her own misery to kiss and coax the loving old soul with the prospect of future pilgrimages to Crossby—while Gil, looking in vain for a reprieve for his master, or a recall to himself, set off to lug out Master Yorke's ancient valises and mails, mantles, spurs, sword, and pistols, with a gruff—'Hold thy tongue, Grizel—Go work, Goody.'

Dick and Nan stood far from the fire, where the wind howled in at the frost-bound casement. Nan held down her tear-stained face, and Dick leant against the wall, and gazed with the wistful will of one who will not gaze long. At last he stepped up to her—'Wilt forgive me, Nan? I've harmed thy father and afflicted thee; but wilt say, God speed thee, Dick, for old acquaintance' sake and for fortune? Our funning and railing are over with the last year's summer. It may be we shall never meet again, and my heart is torn, Nan; if it e'er was hard, the hour has come when it is soft enow.'

Nan laid her hand on his arm, and looked up in his face, a movement which did not comfort him; on the contrary, he started, and groaned afresh.

'Dick, if thou hadst been a prosperous kinsman, a prince's favourite, as I supposed, I would have died ere I owned it——'

He interrupted her, flinging up his hands, and crying out ruefully—'Nan, say no more, since thou didst not let on before. If it had not been for my

own folly, if I had not been too proud to confess myself verily bent, and too full of conceit to endure the thought of being, mayhap, broken, I might have heard what I swear would have made me a happy man. I would not have followed wildings and worldlings in a wild and worldly course, to ride, and dance, and game, and fight my heart away. I would not have adventured so much for so little. I would have cared for my head, and held my own—but it was not so; and Nan, Nan, be content; thou hast conquered.'

But Nan clung to his sleeve. 'Dear Dick, sweet cousin Dick, I love thee; I cannot part from thee,' she cried.

He tried to shake her off—his beauty, so coy once, so fain now—with streaming eyes, not for her father's ruin, but at word of losing him; and his face grew white as some puling lad's with the effort to master himself.

'Spare me, Nan; God bless thee, lass, and reward thee for thine honesty—but it is too late. In troth, I am a banished man; it is a play no longer.'

'Wilt not believe me, Dick? Oh, in spite of my flouts and pouts, I always loved thee.'

'And in spite of my sauciness and court airs, I always loved thee, Nan—yea, a thousand times better than fair, wise Cicely.'

'And I hated Cicely that night because I thought thou hadst given her the preference! Oh, Dick, afterwards I know not whether I loved you or hated

you, but I mostly believed you had guessed my inclination, and despised my kindness, and I would have made a match of it with Sir Hugolin, coarse beast as I knew him to be, though I had no inkling of his falseness, only to surprise and vex you, and rid myself of my liberty. Forgive me, Dick.'

'Forgive thee, Nan! God help us!'

'And take me with thee; let me crawl at thy feet, only leave me not behind.'

'Hush, Nan; hush, my love. It is not to the greenwood—but lurking to-day and running to-morrow—to outlandish shores, to lanes and back stairs—to penury and privation—to hanging on as a camp-follower on some foreign army—to dying like a dog on one of their battle-fields, unnoticed and unknown. I must leave thy father when I've once carried him to old haunts, and seen him renew acquaintance with former friends and early interests. It will be hard enough for us each to pick up a living in his own way. Thou canst not understand. Think no more of me, sweetheart, except as thy poor cousin Dick, who loved thee, and who was foiled in this world by his own wilfulness, and by stress of circumstances.'

'With thee, with thee, Dick; anything with thee—not the whole world without thee,' raved the child; 'let me go as thy varlet, thy serving-boy. My father will pardon the deception when it is too late to undo it. Now I have found thee, Dick, I will not lose thee!'

What could he do, save in his corner kiss her 'from brow unto chin,' and put her from him, gay, mettle Dick, with the faint, sinking struggle—'I cannot tell thy father, lass, that I have not only hurt him, but that I have also stolen his daughter.'

'Then I will do it, Dick,' averred Nan, with the unwavering confidence with which women will proclaim and maintain their infatuation when it will serve the robbers who have possessed themselves of their hearts. She left Dick a laggard for once in his life; she went—a flush upon her soft brown cheek, but no blush upon her brow—her busy hands clasped tight and quiet.

'Father, Dick Yorke and I love each other—we must go together.'

Master Yorke turned from his parchments, and his steel and glass vessels, and his elder daughter, and stared as if his sentence were repealed, Queen Elizabeth stiff and stark in her coffin, the philosopher's stone discovered. Still he had a saw for this as for all other news.

'There was buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, until Noah entered into the ark, and Sodom was destroyed, and so it has been here; but it cannot be, child, it cannot be.'

'It can and it will be,' cried the rebel, less of the woman and more of the child than meets our ken—yet, contradiction if you will, woman to the heart's core at the same time.

'I will slave or I will starve with my Dick and

you in exile; but if you seek to forsake and fail me, I will cling to his neck until I am flung back by force. Cruel father, bethink you we two are in our green youth; dost bid us love, and tell it this night, and say farewell for ever?'

'Nan,' interposed Dick, hoarsely, 'say no more. If we be true, we may be reunited when our blood is thin, and our eyes are dim, and our lips, and hands, and hearts are alike parched and withered—when we have but strength to totter into each other's arms, then I may have Nan and she may have Dick. Great as his provocation has been, Master Yorke will not gainsay me in this.'

'A living death!' raged Nan. 'Father, father, wilt break my heart before thy face?'

Master Yorke passed his hand over his eyes. 'I do not doom thee, daughter—child Nan, that pulled the pied daisies a few short years ago—a woman crying for her lover ere I wissed. What God hath joined, I will not put asunder. Hey for new lands, a soldier's baggage or a beggar's wallet for Nan—and ease and sumptuousness, and an old couple's fondness in the hall of Crossby for Cicely!'

'Nay, father,' interrupted Cicely, 'thou wilt not be unjust. Nan has loved Dick a few days, or weeks, or months, and I thee these many years. You will not leave me alone behind?'

'It is a different love, and a different portion, my Cicely. There is no equality between the old and the young, and therefore no cleaving of the heart-

strings, which, if snapped, the rupture leaves the rich world worthless.'

'You wrong my love, father,' wept Cicely, 'to think that I do not care for thee more than the whole world besides—that I can ever forget thee.'

'Sweet, innocent soul, thou dost care for me much; I have marked it, Cicely; my heart has swelled in answer many a time, and thy Father in heaven will pay thee back the debt of thy father on earth. Dost mark me, Cicely? Thou dost care for me much, I say—but thy mother cared for me more; and so wilt thou one day learn to regard thy husband, my good daughter.'

'Father,' said Cicely, violently, for the poor child's heart was oppressed with heavy calamity and smitten with a sense of undeserved injury, and burning with swift jealousy, 'if thou acceptest Nan's company and rejectest mine, what am I to think? I am the elder. Wherein have I come short of my duty? In what did she outdo me? When did I fear hardship? Is it because she deceived us, and had Dick for her lover without asking your consent, yea, without our privity? Is she to be honoured and promoted, and am I to be set aside, forsaken, given over to the cold charity of strangers to sight if not to blood? I ever did my best. Is this all that duty and devotion have won, father?'

'Duty!' cried Master Yorke, sharply; 'where is duty to be found, mistress? I trow it has been

twice a-wanting to me this night from my children. Women, girls weak and witless, where has been your godly upbringing? Has it gone for nought? Ah! Master Dyer, you warned me that I was over-indulgent, sinfully complacent and careless, not able to rule others when I was engrossed with my own concerns. Sure am I not another righteous household, far or near, would have presented such unseemly disobedience and discord.'

Cicely was shamed and shocked. She had been reared in deep reverence and unquestioning submission to her father, and Nan and she had signally failed in the spirit, if not in the letter, of the commandment.

'I excused it in the girl Nan as the fruit of a new passion, not unnatural, if excessive—I trust neither idolatrous nor wanton; and certes, it will meet its own crosses and trials without my untoward intervention. But, Cicely, thou art in thy sober mind,' continued Master Yorke, severely, 'what hast thou to say for thy disrespect and turbulent opposition to my will and pleasure?'

Cicely's contrite heart hardened and soured in its rebound. 'Nothing, father. You will have Nan; she will doubtless spare what she can of her late discovered devotion for Dick Yorke to give her parent. You will not miss me.' But Cicely's heart failed her at the thought, and she pressed her face in her kerchief to silence her choking sobs. Master Yorke looked at her for awhile, half in stateliness, half in

sadness—while Dick and Nan heeded them not, forgot them, and whispered together warmly, in the disastrous confusion, in the midst of the other's cold, fallen despair.

But the sadness, though he was no grumbler, was more akin to Master Yorke than the loftiness; and at last he arose and approached his daughter, put his trembling hand on her shoulder, and whispered earnestly in her ear—'Cicely, it is clean impossible. I am not able to support any one; and if I could, for how long would the strength last? Dick will have enough to do to bear the burden of his wedded wife. I should be consigning thee to suffering and degradation—it might be infamy. Child, child, I dare not. Ask it not of me; do not inflict on me such killing anxiety. Accept the good heritage which is provided for thee. Deliver me from the sorest trouble—not that of being ruined myself by Dick's foolhardiness, but seeing my children ruined likewise, and driven to curse him as the cause. Put it as you say—I stoop to share Nan's devotion to her lover—I am content to take but the remnant of her affections—and from you I require sacrifice. But if so, count you which is the dearest boon; and though I have not meant to deal unfairly, judge you which is the best beloved child.'

And Cicely, tortured though she was by family sorrow, by private personal aggravation, was too true and great to resist this appeal. She flung herself on her knees before her father, and putting her

clasped hands in his, forfeited her rights with unsullied, tender words.

'I will stay, father, if it is best for thee; take Nan and Dick, and leave me behind. Father, do with me what thou wilt.'

Perhaps in all England there was not, to be unhaunted by remorse, a more unexpectedly beaten, wrung, and bruised heart—a wearier wight than Cicely Yorke on this last night in Barne-elms. Yet if she could have seen through the misty future she would have looked to a peaceful end—sometimes painful, sometimes joyous, always, even in corruption and declension, salted with faith and lighted with love. She would have gazed with awe and fondness, commingled and supreme, on an old man's painless death-bed, and a good man's hopeful beginning of a new and glorious existence; she would have heard, with a great thrill of appeased desire, a feeble voice talking wanderingly, yet with a meaning, of Jacob and his sons, and though he had seen the face of his Joseph no more, yet turning from his dear ones near him to call down the best blessing 'on the crown of the head of *her* who was separated from *her* brethren;' she would have seen Dick and Nan in middle life; he bold, ready, enterprising, independent, a valuable man—she lively, managing, with a care for every child, a word for every guest, a quick, stingless scold for every servant, a popular, useful woman; and they so easy, so free, so careless to each other, that it seemed like a

dream, that desperate love-fit, that overflow of romance, that clash and clang of contending emotions, and jumble of dolours and delites, in which Cicely had lost the cream of their hidden attachment and its abrupt proclamation, and in which they had joined hands. Cicely might have foolishly and faithlessly doubted how the golden chain had stood the strain and friction of daily wear and tear, and fancied that it was worn like the girdle of the wan, capricious Maiden of Avenel, to a hair of use and wont, were it not that Nan betrayed to her favourites blessed dew-drops from heaven falling on the tiny rings and locks from the necks of her darlings, cropped when the harvest was golden—not nut-brown or dusky black, from crowing infants, to become brave men and fair women, and fight for themselves in the great battle of life, seas apart from each other, and from the mother that bore them—and just so brightly gemmed, in the casket with these early trophies, lay another prize, the long love-lock of Dick, twined round the Howard's hawthorn, cut off the night he heard of a certain headsman's axe and bloody scaffold, and constituted a sacred relic, as if it did not belong to those worn, grizzled hairs which their mistress touched so lightly. Moreover, when Dick came back from chase, or feast, or fray, from the weariness and the forlornness of disappointment, from the pride and elation of success, his bright, piercing eye never rested on superior, inferior, friend or foe, until it found an answering

glance. Ever, if he did no more, he looked first beyond and aside to his comely mistress, his active housewife, as if he found in her a second, more interested marrow; even as volatile Charles of Lorraine bent eagerly and emphatically to faithful Maria Theresa, not as the people's, but as her emperor. Pleasant and conclusive, even to a stranger, was that slight, inadvertent homage in Dick Yorke's brusque, unceremonious bearing, growing always less courtly and more curt in unmalleable, unwieldy age; and he who ran might read, that in chances and changes, divisions and discords, at least Dick and Nan had found their fellows in the spring, and so escaped many a soil and stain, stumble and fall, preserved what was honest and kind, manly and womanly, done themselves justice and credit, proved, with all their faults, a worthy couple, entered upon winter hale and hearty, and slept at last in honour and union, in Christian faith and charity, as represented in ruff and gown, in Maestricht-stone chased with brass, in yonder church chancel—a happiness for future generations to regard and to recall.

CHAPTER XII.

ALONE.

ON the night following that when Master Yorke discoursed to Cicely, and Cicely sang and prattled to her father, and Nan nid-nodded, and Gil and Grizel worked, and had their share of the spluttering nuts and nappy ale in the light of their Christmas hearth, where the mummers gambolled, and Dick Yorke unfolded his secret and his suit—a solitary figure, an unprotected, bereaved girl, cowered and crooned, with a breaking heart and a sickening brain, over the smouldering embers, with nought but 'the pale, cold moon,' which had looked so silvery fair when it shone upon her dreaming in her gallery, in the fruitful summer nights, when the cattle were lowing, sheep bleating, dogs barking, the evening meal preparing, and the shy, impassioned nightingale heard in trills and snatches between—but a mocking ghost sailing among the heavy, troubled clouds in this barren, bitter night. Companion or friend she had none, though the sur-

rounding circumstances were little changed. Master Yorke's papers and valuables were many of them spread out as usual, and his chair pushed almost to the centre of the hall; only Nan's silk embroidered saddle and old Grizel's hood were a-missing. The mastiff Warden was baying long and loud; but Cicely's doves, by the fire-gleams, were perched side by side, their crimson-tinged throats ruffled, that their heads might rest more securely under their grey wings.

Thus the cross-purposes fell out. To avoid suspicion, Gil and Grizel had started with much plain on one part, at the winter's dawn, to carry a summons to Crossby, and to proceed thence to their destination. Cicely accompanied her father, Dick, and Nan, a clouded company, betimes in the morning, to an obscure hostelry at the opposite entrance to Cambridge. For the same reason of escaping notice, the family dared not tarry together at the first stage of their journey, but parted hurriedly, under a false alarm, with keen pangs, Cicely receiving Master Yorke's solemn blessing, Nan clasping her neck—how fondly at the last—Dick lingering to supplicate a fresh pardon, and do her some final service—those three, already in the hodden grey of country people, by doubles and windings, forced marches and midnight starts, to repair to the nearest coast, Dick and Nan to be buckled together by the first convenient Puritan parson, and Cicely to remain unobtrusively in the upper room of the

inn, till the escort and the led-horse, (as Cicely had come thus far on a pillion,) arrived from Crossby, certainly ere sunset, to take her to her kinsmen.

Cicely awoke from her desolation in the raw twilight to a missive delivered by a stupid groom, who rode alone in and out of the courtyard, without waiting for any further communication. A line written by her father's cousin, not unchristian or unfriendly, but composed in the uncordial and uncommunicative strain of the few and far between letters of the century—announcing that his excellent and lamented mother had departed this life, and been laid in the family vault unknown to Master Richard Yorke, of Barne-elms, as the writer took shame to record, a week ago. But, in apology, he had to state that as he was her one child and stay, his attention had been greatly engrossed by her illness and its melancholic end; and that he had been further distraught by the sudden seizure of his father—overcome by the shock of the loss of his esteemed spouse, and, further, an aged man of fourscore—on the occasion of the late lykewake, and now lying speechless in a fit-illness, to all appearance a-dying. Wherefore, Master Tobie Yorke, while condoling with his kinsman in this trouble, prayed his good cousin, Mistress Cicely, to tarry with any friend, or respectable, responsible person, of whom she must know many in Cambridge, until she should hear the issue of his father's ailment—whether he would recover or de-

part—when, in either case, he would make suitable arrangements for her entertainment and solace. The conclusion of the letter was somewhat vague and mysterious. The fact was this—Master Tobie Yorke was in a strait—the mortality which threatened his family had anticipated his marriage with a lady of his own degree, and in his own county. Now, whether this damsel was of a jealous turn of mind, or whether Master Tobie was sheepish, it did strike him that the introduction into his widowed or bachelor household, at this distressed epoch, of a young female cousin, was an offence against the proprieties even of Queen Bess's reign—a scandal in the sight of his affianced partner—a great care on his own hands, and a probable obstacle to his near felicity. So Master Tobie staves off the visitation, never suspecting Mistress Cicely of being friendless, and silences his doubts by the firmest resolutions to wed his bride on the very first opportunity, and having thus supplied deficiencies, prepare to act the host and guardian with a will that would atone for all delay. In parentheses be it recorded, with a sigh over the vanity of human intentions, that the old Squire of Crossby was so long of dying, or the young Squire was so engrossed with his nuptials and their consequences, that he utterly lost sight of his cousin Cicely, thereby planting a sting in his own breast, whenever his body was in his arm-chair, or his sluggish powers of memory chanced to meddle with this incident in his life; but this was rarely, and of course

he trusted she had done well—and, really, she was not his concern; and so ended for ever the family relation between the Yorkes of Barne-elms and the Yorkes of Crossby.

Cicely knew nothing of these reasons—she was only conscious that Master Tobie Yorke, of Crossby, found himself in a dilemma, and declined or deferred his acceptance of the commission entrusted to him as his father's representative—that he was cold and scrupulous, and had prevented her from entering into explanations of her dire need of his countenance and protection, by not coming in person, or charging his rider to bring home an account of her state, and her content with his proposal.

Cicely was scared and distracted; and her sense, and she had much, seemed forsaking her in contemplating the overthrow of their plans, and the desolation of which her father had never dreamt. The commission to apprehend her father, Dick had said, would not act till next day; but the danger was very near, and what if it should include her, the stray vestige of his household? Yet this was Cicely's least fear. In the morning the cavalcade had cautiously made a detour to an inferior hostelry, where they were unknown; and Cicely's remaining behind —her prolonged stay—the non-arrival of the saddle-horse or litter for her use, which had been carefully announced to the inn people—and the instant departure of her cousin's fellow after he did trot in, had excited the very attention which they had

sought to avoid; and, in addition, notions most embarrassing and detrimental to Cicely.

The woman of the house—a domineering, calculating, bold-faced, be-ribboned Dame Quickly, supposing her a run-away from lawful authority, a poor creature, melancholy mad, deserted by her relations, a victim infected by a new plague, or the cast-off minion of a profligate—intruded into the girl's presence, plied her with awkward, impudent questions; and on her recoil from observation, and her defiance of unauthorized interference, terrified her, on the plea of Cicely's cumbering her parlour, with the proposed introduction into her company, as too good for it, it might be, of certain members of the baxters and boat-builders' guilds, and a draft from the dissipated soldiery quartered at Cambridge, who were preparing to hold an evening carousal at the Chopping-knife, Proctor's-lane.

Cicely hastily caught up her muffler and mantle, paid her bill—happily her little purse contained enough—and leaving her travelling-box to be sent for, fled into the friendless suburb and gathering night.

Where should she turn? With morning she had dissolving visions of tracking her deceived friends, or seeking out dear Goody Grizel, who would be a mother to her at the Suffolk farm-house. But her case was imminent. It was too far to admit the possibility of trudging to the Hancocks, if they would receive her under disgrace, and Cicely was now col-

lapsing into chill unbelief; the Dorsets would think nothing of turning her from their door with a scoff and a taunt. No other friends recurred to her disturbed mind, though the girl must have had other acquaintances less than inhuman. Her old home was still free for a few hours. With an animal's instinct she retraced with speed the familiar road, and reached Barne-elms when the gusty night-wind was blowing among the few bare branches of the stripped chase, and the rising moon beginning to wade her troubled way through a sleety, tempestuous night, as stormy as that which had gone before; and just as Master Yorke was sipping his early night-draught, and reflecting with thankfulness that his Cicely must now be at Half-way Oaks to their cousins of Crossby.

In the press of the family's flight the household furniture and the domestic animals had remained behind—as if they had gone at sunrise for a New-Year's junket or a neighbourly merry-making, and would return of a surety before sunset. Cicely let herself into the empty house, and her heart died within her as her foot echoed over the silent threshold, and tenantlessness looked down upon her from the staircases, and the gallery, and the open upper chamber doors. Cicely had the forethought to make some preparations for her temporary sojourn; she raked together and rekindled the half-extinguished embers—she dared not light a lamp, lest its beam should attract a wanderer—she collected the fragments of the last meal, and even went to an outhouse

and milked one of the cows for her refreshment; then she sat down on the hearth in its desolation.

The sensitive, impressible girl was wrestling with one of the most awful horrors that can beset mortal mind —not the superstitious fear of gibbering ghost— not the childish aversion to shrouding darkness; no, the shadowy company of those mailed and veiled Yorkes of the Edwards and the Henries would have been almost a relief. Alexander Selkirk learned to dread this sensation when his hair rose at noon-day under the broad blaze of the tropical sun of his island.

It was solitude closing in upon her—that sense of lost singleness of existence which the unreasoning animal world cannot realize, which is too much for man's bounded understanding, and which, allowed to fall without sustaining prop or channel of escape, as certainly crushes the mind, as we can imagine the grand blue canopy above us, or the devilish ingenuity within the walls of the Italian chamber, descending or contracting, would squeeze and annihilate the form and fabric of the body.

Without the care of her Father and Lord whose little one she was, without a fellow-creature's mad love, beautiful, noble Cicely Yorke might have been found by the myrmidons of the law a mowing idiot, or a cold and lifeless piece of clay.

As Cicely covered her face with her hands, and bent down all bathed in that sweat of desperate, nameless apprehension, her doves fluttered nearer each other in their sleep, and—slightest sound in the

stillness—that was the first touch of the golden sceptre which the King of kings holds down to the miserable among his people. Here was life near her—the life which God gave and God preserves. Why should she be so amazed and dismayed? And immediately, as if a spell was broken, Warden without, in the lull of the wind, rattled his chain as he came out to bay at the moon, a plough horse champed and stamped in the stable, and an early cock crowed once clear and shrill.

Such an overthrow as had overtaken Cicely was, like the temptations of which the Apostle wrote, not 'a strange thing' in those times. Cicely had not lived to hear of Arabella Stewart—fit representative of the hapless Stewarts—brought back with her husband from the ill-starred midnight boat on the Thames, 'drumly and dark,' as it rolls past the Tower-stairs; but she had sung the country folks' song of the Duchess of Suffolk and her Bertie—(that Duchess whose lads Death struck down with twin darts at this Cambridge)—like Margaret of Anjou and her boy-prince, indebted to fierce outlaws, and not even in an English forest, or able to plead for mercy in her native tongue.

Dick had related for her delectation such thrilling fire and faggot tales of the martyrs of the last reigns, collected and indited by a wild-eyed, thin-haired Master Fox, once the preceptor of my Lord Duke himself. Ah, yes, 'these were they who came through much tribulation'—Cranmer, in 'the

terrible awfulness of his atonement,' his fellow bishops, John Hullier, martyred on Jesus Green, Cambridge—the divines, the gentlemen, the artificers, the widows, wives, and maidens, and, ah! the innocents, the two boys and the two infants! Among them loomed in celestial light to Cicely the figure of Anne Ascue—Mistress Anne Ascue, or Kyme, of Kelsey, in Lincolnshire—not older than Cicely, learned and meek as the Lady Jane, driven from her husband's house and her children, a prisoner, her wretched condition bemoaned by her maids levying groats from the 'prentices in the thoroughfares,'—Lady Denny, of Waltham, sending her 'eight shillings by her man in a violet coat,'—her tender limbs racked in the Tower, the Chancellor Wriothesley applying the torture with his own hand,—publicly burnt at the stake in Smithfield along with 'a gentleman of the royal household, a Shropshire clergyman, and a poor London tailor,' a goodly company—ascending her fiery chariot to receive her palm and her crown of gold trebly refined, with wondrous courage and constancy—so that the hearts of the bystanders were melted not so much with pity as with fervent admiration and a sick envy.

What was Cicely Yorke that she should cry out or despair? She had endured no torments, she was exposed to no violent death, she was not condemned to behold the sufferings of others dearer than her own flesh and blood. What had she seen of 'necks tied fast to a post or stay with towels, and so the

iron being hot put to their cheeks?' She was only brought face to face with privation, and subjected to the dread of ungodly men. Her God and her father's God would bear her through this shallow stream. And Cicely lifted herself humbly, and began to repeat to herself psalms and verses, and take heart for the unknown future.

Nevertheless it was a wild night, 'a naughty night to swim in,' as the poor crazed king experienced ere long; and here was no faithful Kent, no Mad Tom. As the hailstorm dashed against the thick panes of the lattices, the lines of a northern ballad stole into Cicely's mind—

> Oh! ope the door, Lord Gregory;
> Oh! ope and let me in;

And the lines, once said, haunted her tongue, and with their repetition there rose before Cicely the whole of the Mask of the Nut-brown Maid, and one strong-moved face that gazed at her steadfastly. The same proud, unflinching head was now bending over the lamp-lit page, in seclusion complete as a cloister's, while the blast swept round his college quadrangle, and the flame before him did not waver so wildly in the draught as the red blood 'strowted' into Cicely's olive cheek at the idea.

The vision would not depart—the stern student and his face—if she should knock at the door, and implore his helping hand, his assistance and protection, for Christ's dear sake. The picture was so vivid

that Cicely could hardly dissolve it, and was fain to exorcise it with fresh passages of Scripture and Puritan hymns; but when all in an instant, as before, there came a knocking at the hall-door, accompanied by the long, sullen growl, and short, fierce bark of Warden, as he strained his chain to reach the intruder, Cicely started up, and stood in the centre of the room, shaking in every limb, and helpless as a strayed child.

Was it the pursuivants and men-at-arms doing their duty beforehand, and incensed to find the nest empty and the bird flown? Was it blustering, false, brutal Sir Hugolin, come to prosecute his evil purpose, and satisfy his dark desires? and Cicely quaked more and more, and bethought her deliriously that no shriek of hers would reach that clerk's room in Cambridge, if it should awake him from a brown study, or animate his benumbed arm—and Anne Ascue's might not be the worst fate in this convulsed, criminal world. Was it some of the vagabond rufflers and Abraham men, who had struck upon Barne-elms by chance in their circuit? In no case could Cicely defend herself, and her feet were glued to the floor; she could not fly, she could not hide; she was, save when her soul raised her above her body, physically a coward, a weak, timid woman. In as far as she was conscious, she had recognised no reverberating footsteps, and the voice that mingled with the din carried no meaning to her ears.

Ah! she was lost; one of the lattices was thrust in, and amid the rush of whistling wind and wetting slush, a man clambered to the sill, and leapt in upon the floor.

There stood Cicely in the faint, flickering light, arrested, frozen with ghastly fear, in the centre of the hall; and there, with a great gasp of consolation, she knew William Lee, in his dripping cloak, standing opposite her, where he had forced a pathway.

'God's love, what is this, Mistress Cicely?' he cried incoherently. 'Is Master Yorke haled to prison? Am I too late? I was here last night, but you had other company. Have they taken all else, and left you? God be thanked, you have escaped.'

'My father is gone in time, sir,' she said, slowly; and she repented with the swiftness of thought that she had not already taken comfort in this. A stranger thanked God heartily for her escape, why had she forgotten her father's safety? Where had been her filial gratitude?

'And why are you here, madam, all alone and uncared for? This is no place for you,' he went on hurriedly. Cicely was silent; she had a nervous, perverse impulse to resent his control, and echo disparagingly, 'And this is no place for you.'

He flung down his cloak and cap, and advanced passionately—'Mistress Cicely, there is none between thee and me.'

She put out her hands, it might have been to

thrust him back, it might have been to throw herself upon his protection, but she cried out all the same—'Master Lee, remember yourself, and spare me.'

He did not retreat; he did not pause. ''Mistress Cicely, you have none left but me—let come what will;' and she was in the haven of his arms.

So Dick Yorke's offence and peril, and Master Yorke's undoubting confidence in his kinsman, and Master Tobie of Crossby's halting hesitation, brought about that folly.

'Get thee ready, sweetheart,' enjoined Lee; 'in with me to Cambridge; I will find thee poor but respectable shelter for this night, and we will wed to-morrow morn, if priest and cassock, book and bell, are to be had for love or money.'

'Alas! Master Lee, I will mar thy fortunes, and work thy destruction,' lamented Cicely, on whom the first fascination for the student had borne its fruit. The Yorkes were all susceptible to kindness, and Cicely was thinking, with bashful, glistening eyes, and a glow about her ravished heart, how she had striven to discard his image with the argument: 'My poor face is but a shadow that crosses the black-letter, the crabbed Greek and Latin, over which he pores, and distracts and enrages him; he would not risk one folio for sight or sound of me;' and here was he prepared to sacrifice place and prospects, name and fame for her without a word.

Master Lee was indeed infatuated, and incapable of counting the costs, if he had been willing to

undertake that awkward process. 'Tush, Cicely, what care I? Dub me Will; say to me, 'Pardie, there is no man I love like thee,' and dean and chapter, bench and bishop, may do their worst. Hast never loved another man as thou ownest thou mayst love me, in spite of the flings thou hast given me, mistress?'

'I cannot tell, sir,' answered Cicely, coyly; 'I am not used to such questions.'

'Enough, enough, sweet Cicely; at least thou lovest me now—me best, me first, if not me only,' he cried, with his flushing, panting rapture, that sat so marvellously on the white, firm face, with the meditative eyes. Another Abelard to another Heloise.

'Nay, Will Lee,' owned Cicely Yorke, never chary when once she gave, casting policy to the winds, replying to the yearning which she understood quickly, hastening royally to press full measure into the bosom where she reigned queen; 'thou hadst my first thought, sore it vexed me to know it; thou hast had the first man's kiss, and as thou sayest thou wilt have this poor hand, which is left to be generously taken, so bare—as any lass's on the lea—so weak, and God help me, an it be not also ill-omened.'

'Haste, dear Cicely, haste,' cried Master Lee, feverishly. 'Fetch bag and baggage; let us be going—the road, girl, the road, that the bargain be sooner sealed.'

But Cicely lingered in the dim light of her father's

deserted hearth. What! leave it to carry ruin to another! What! reward the scholar louting at her feet by barring his rise and blighting his ambition. She was no silly chit—she knew a learned man's thirst for further knowledge—something, too, of his dreams of distinction. What! reduce them to ashes, and fancy that Will Lee would love and cherish her—would rest content in their humble home, and in mean avocations—would refrain from wishing this rash, luckless contract unfulfilled, and cursing the fair face that had beguiled him.

Marry! the contrary was worth resistance, struggle, difficulty, delay.

'Stay a moment, Master Lee; let us not be forward. I know thou hast some word of a curacy in the spring—I heard thee tell my father in the porch, though I went on pruning the musk-rose. Let us wait, I pray thee, fair sir. I would prefer it much; so would my father for me, if he were here in person. You can then resign your Fellowship; and if you be still of the same mind, we may begin housekeeping together on an even footing with any other pastor and his wife. In the meantime, we will think of some other refuge for me. Since—since I have known your truth, sir, I am not ashamed to say it, and learnt what Heaven has in store for me, I am not afeared to dwell here for a season—the house has provisions, and some of them can be stowed away—the yard is full, they will not tarry to gut it entirely. I know the lurking-place—the hole in the

barn-floor. I can conceal myself during the day till the pursuit after my father is over.'

'How! leave thee to the furies, or a thousand-fold worse, the mercies of Sir Hugolin Botelier—to the impudency of the Queen's beaters—to want and cold, perhaps, for they will plunder and destroy everything that robbers can lift or madmen spoil, if the house itself be not burnt about thine ears—a sorry treatment for my love! Perish every place-man's stall, every reader's desk sooner.'

'But they will expel thee from the University; thou wilt lose the Fellowship that was of such moment to thee.'

'Was it of such moment? I'faith I forgot it in a better prize. And more was lost when the great Alexandrian library was burnt; yet thou seest letters live on. I am not the first ill-doer: there was Richard Maden, Master of Clare Hall; and, hark ye, Cranmer himself—and because his wife, an honest woman, was a kinswoman of the hostess of the Dolphin, and Cranmer paid frequent visits to the hostel—reason good—the Romanists circulated the impudent, preposterous lie that the great man was in his youth an hostler.' Lee did not add, though he remembered very well, the conclusion that, Cranmer's wife dying within the year, he was re-elected Fellow of Jesus College—the sole precedent of such an act of oblivion.

'I trow it is a Turkish measure,' sighed Cicely, unheeding that the Turks object not to one wife—on the contrary, permit a score of these evils.

Cicely was dazzled and smitten with fond remorse. Was there no loophole of escape from this wrong and hurt? Must she stab him, talking lightly to deceive her, in the tenderest point. His 'coat' or his 'cloak' she could have taken from him—his means were nothing; but his scholarship relinquished—his attainments lost to his country. No penniless man could ponder and compare, weigh, watch, and work in the immortal field with the calmness of an immortal—a difficulty the wise founders foresaw, and executed their prevision to obviate. Yet they were self-contained and pitiless, these masters; it would be no sacrilege to thwart and disobey them; there was only one way to the end, one resource. Master Dyer inveighed against it, but it was not forbidden in the Commandments, or included in the deadly sins, and prelate and peer, Papist and Puritan, seemed to practise it on the right hand and on the left.

The private marriage was an institution of the reign of Elizabeth fraught with sorrow and suffering, trial and temptation, which history has chronicled with her iron pen, but which was not then regarded in any clear or decided light. Even the rigid Puritans were confused and lax in their opinions. Abraham and Isaac had called Sarah and Rebekah their sisters; the patriarchs were injured and shamed by the frauds, but the various sectarians preferred understanding the incidents as permissions to construing them into warnings.

The Queen, the representative of Protestantism in Europe, was disposed to insist on the celibacy of the clergy, and refused to authorize their marrying by an express law; and here was a stumblingblock to a large and influential body of the people. Elizabeth would not even declare valid marriages contracted under the prohibitions of former reigns, so that the sons of both Cranmer and Archbishop Parker were under the necessity of procuring private bills of legitimization. Again, in the universities, the partial reform of existing institutions appeared to precede their speedy and entire freedom; and the changes afforded men a half right to evade and deny the old injunctions when so impelled.

Above all, these were crude times, when men and women, almost the best of them, stumbled as readily into broad, wandering paths, as they entered with single-hearted dauntlessness at the strait gate, and prepared to fight the enemy in the narrow way. Great were their errors, great also was their faith. Leicester, his son Sir Robert Dudley, Raleigh, Essex, Mountjoy, among scores of less noted Lotharios, good, bad, and indifferent, ran the same formidable gauntlet: it is plain that ecclesiastical dignitaries were not wanting; no, nor tricks of office, delusions of principals, retentions of forfeited benefits—grieve as we may to write it—only remember, though the sin was the same, the misguided sinners were very differently situated then from now.

Had the New World anything to do with the

levity of the Benedicts of this generation? Did it occur to them that a *better* half might eventually be found for hearth and board, as well as sought across the Western Main?

It would be false to say that Cicely Yorke did not recoil from this strait, had not an instinctive perception that it was an unfair aim, that she should be deprived of her crown of honour—degraded by the compromise; but this last was a selfish scruple—was she to make no concession, and endure no tribulation, on his account? The suffering would be hers—the deed directed against empty rules and barriers would (in sophistry) injure no man. Was she rather to be righteous overmuch than to serve and save him?

Thus Cicely was left to herself to start the suggestion.

'Then, Master Lee, if we are to be made one before God and man, might it not be kept secret for a time—until you got farther preferment? I am content to abide the withholding the proclamation. I am not affrighted to trust to your honour, sir, else this had not been mooted betwixt us. A privy contract need concern no one. If the benefactors had been acquainted with the circumstances, I think they would have forgiven thee at least.'

'I think they would,' exclaimed Lee, gazing down at her, and stopping his preparations. 'Gramercy, Cicely, they greatly erred after all, if they fancied a man would do more for his own hand than for a life dearer a thousandfold. It cannot be wrong to set

them right. Ah! Cicely,' he pursued, restlessly, 'I incline to thy proposal, though I would not have broached it—because I would have thee the wife of Lee, the great scholar, not of Lee the copier or the dominie. I hear them tell of a Scot, named Crichton, not twenty years of age, who has gained a brave reputation at Paris. An we had but a curacy to set us a-going we would have a chance—I would study day and night, but I would win thee honour, sweetheart; and I would fain do credit to my university, and fulfil my obligation. Master Yorke would commend his daughter's choice; he would love to correspond with his son.'

'He would do that, anyhow, master. But say no more on this business; I dare to say thou wilt find some corner wherein to dispose of me; and some parson to give us his blessing honestly, though it be in the dark,' sighed Cicely; 'that is, supposing thou wilt not suffer me to remain single until our probation be ended.'

Lee protested vehemently against this bygone conclusion, and repeated his cry red-hotly, as a man would call 'to horse,' for her bag and baggage, that they might quit debateable ground at once and for ever.

'Alake,' answered Cicely, with a sad smile, 'I have not even that provision. The chest containing my wearing apparel, which was taken to the Chopping-knife, to be forwarded to Crossby, lies there still, and may lie for me, since I will not dare to claim it. I told thee, Master Lee, I come to thee

rudely, like a lass off the lea, not like a gentle Yorke, whose fathers fought in the French wars.'

'Right welcome, only too welcome,' swore the enamoured scholar.

'But if thou wouldst pleasure me, and forgive the cumber,' she continued timidly, for she had not sounded his humour, though she had staked her all on his truth, 'I would have poor Warden fed; he is too strong a tyke not to be valuable, and to fall with the rest of the live stock into careful hands to-morrow; but I would carry with me my birds, which may have their necks wrung for any use they are like to prove to others, and I cared for them many a thoughtless, happy day; besides, they were the first things I noticed after my stupor, and my heart smote me that I had left them behind this morning when I thought to go to Crossby.'

'Nay! mistress, mine arm is not so weak that it cannot bear thee both, and my heart is not so narrow that it cannot admit thy sweet fancies. I am not a gentle man, nor observant, it may be, but thou wilt see, Cicely, if I will not hang this cage in daily green in remembrance of this night, and in love of thy smallest belonging.'

So Cicely on one arm, and the cage with her doves on the other, Master Lee started on the dark stormy night along the rough, noisome road to Cambridge.

Another change to Cicely since the morning—this walk, dreamy and fantastic, in spite of its prominent

physical features. Then she had accompanied her family in their route, lamenting the shock which had driven them from their home and from each other; now she began with William Lee, amid brooding obscurity and the war of elements, her solitary march to the world's end.

Lee carried Cicely to a cottage beyond the Pease Market, and behind the orchard of the Master of Trinity, occupied by an outlying servant of the University, a poor, honest man, with sour but sober wife, and a clever son, whom Lee had assisted and promoted, so that the whole family were bound to abet and succour him at a pinch. Lee left Cicely there on an impulse to speed to secure the aid of a companion who had just taken orders, and was on the eve of abandoning Cambridge to officiate as tutor to a nobleman on his travels, guiding his selection with a greater degree of pure forethought and prudence than could have been expected from his character and position.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER HIDDEN WIFE.

THE deed was done. As Dick and Nan were joined tight and fast on their first halt in the presence of Master Yorke, William Lee and Cicely went out in the white winter morning, and, unguessed by the world, save the priest, the clerk, and the University man as witness, were united as surely and irrevocably by that ring which did not receive for long years the posy that was engraven on it with John Dunton's

God saw thee
Most fit for me;

and that before Sir Hugolin had awoke from his ast night's debauch, and ridden forward to seize his own, and lay waste his neighbour's, and to humble the proud wenches, one of whom at least had not ceased to show him the cold shoulder; and he was the man to care less for the caresses of foolish Nan, whom he fancied his own, than for the prayers and

the prostration which he might wring from 'the demure devil, Mistress Cicely.' That same bitter night the thick smoke and leaping flames rose from the ancient roof-tree of Barne-elms, and the treasures of good Master Yorke—cursed by the foul-mouthed mob as a warlock and a malcontent—were strewn to the winds; but Cicely, happier far than the high-minded Scottish heroine of whom it came to be ruefully written,

> They led her to the hie hill top,
> Where she saw the burning of Airlie,

did not witness the devastation and havoc. She sat lone and in peace at the ingle neuk of Joyce Stacie, her hand in her husband's, her ear bent to catch his whispers, half provoking him by her feints to keep him at a distance before the good folks there, who quartered them, took them at their word, winked at the irregularity of their proceedings, and expressed no more than a gloom of the brow or a shake of the head at the instability of their footing, and the rashness of their connexion, and by her laudable efforts to resume her Flanders knitting—that ingenious and admirable performance, by means of which looped hose eclipsed leather and cloth leggings—the first step which created a shade of respect in the hard head of crusty Mother Stacie, very different from indulgent, fondling Goody Grizel, towards her guest, or rather lodger. Cicely forgot to look backward, to clasp her hands, and cry, 'Woe's

me!' till the college bells were ringing, and Lee, gathering up his cloak, and snatching a parting salute, hastened away to escape locking out this night.

So severe was the storm that preceded the alteration in her condition, that Cicely's peculiar circumstances proved more tolerable to her than might have been. The Stacies had the air of truth, and they were bound to Lee, and unlikely to divulge his secret. Their cottage stood alone in a mossy alley, formed by the walls of an old chapel and the little frequented orchard; it had a strong ashen bolt and thick ashen shutters, and Lee had always frequented it for the sake of the young lad, now a sizar in Trinity. His visits need not be remarked, neither was it anybody's business if the Stacies had a female cousin who paid them a visit, and supported the tartness and steely uprightness of the dame—one of the pugnacious lower class of Cambridge—and the deafness and dulness of her husband. Granting that this cousin was a mort too fair for a University town, with its droves of students, still if she could order her behaviour carefully, and remain of her wont within doors, there was no fear of her. The worst thing was that Cicely, though she had been a home-keeper, was of course familiar with Cambridge, knew many faces there, and was known to many. Here security rested on the grounds that she now took up her quarters in the district of which she had least knowledge, and that when recognised

it was but the explanation that Master Yorke, of Barne-elms, was in trouble, and that his daughter for that reason had sought and found refuge with humble friends—and her privacy might perchance be respected. Cicely herself feared most any contact with the Madam Dorsets, but then they dwelt in an opposite direction, and holding their heads high among the University families, and, counting themselves county gentry, they kept aloof from the whole town. Cicely had a faint hope that she would avoid them, and indeed, happily for her, they did not cross her path during the entire period of her stay under the Stacies' roof.

Yet it must be confessed the Stacies' one apartment was very close, very dark, very brown, smelling of stock-fish, herbs, and smoke; the little window, glazed with horn, admitted meagre supplies of air and light; and the cross-beams with their burden descended so low as to threaten the uprightness of any ordinary mortal, and altogether to come into collision with William Lee's head, now that he raised in place of slouching it; and the carved bed for the old couple, and the truckle-bed in the loft (gained by the trap from the chimney-corner), which had belonged to young Joyce, and was resigned to Cicely, were of the humblest—consistent with a decent woman's cleanliness.

Then old Joyce and his wife's occupation, when he was not serving as porter to the University, or she engaged in her housewifery—that of weaving

and mending nets for the river and the fens—trenched on the confined space; and if Cicely, with scarcely room to move, ventured to touch web or shuttle, to put her hand to the increased family-work of cooking and burnishing of trenchers and porringers, or even presumed to stir the milk porridge, she was certain to be met with an imperious 'Tilly-vally, mistress, I can manage my own affairs,' from Mother Stacie.

It was not possible for Cicely not to feel her reverses, and fret at her want of liberty and inability for action; but men and women of all degrees were hardier when they rose with the lark and went to bed with the lamb; they could surmount extreme discomfort, and say nothing about it; and Cicely had self-reliance as well as energy, gentle wisdom along with strong will.

It was but for a season; with the sweet breath of spring, the Battle of Summer and Winter, the May-poles, would come the curacy (either Chesterton or Orwell, as far as can be ascertained), the open announcement of her new state, the commencement of hopeful, independent housekeeping. The Stacies were not unfriendly; Cicely was reasonable enough to consider the risk they ran in becoming parties to her private marriage, whose validity they never questioned, though the mother, at least, evidently disapproved of its celebration. Old Joyce was meek in his infirmity, and his partner, though so austere as to have been a strict Romanist under penance, when

she observed that Cicely, though she had contrived to recover her limited mails, wisely confined herself to the petticoat of stammel or Bristow red, and the long-sleeved smock, 'like to winter's snow,' each sleeve tied not unbecomingly at the hand with a silken riband, according to her presumed station, and that she pertinaciously objected to wearing her black hair tired and uncovered as she had done when she was an unwedded maiden, extended to her a flag of truce by supplying her with one of those piles of white kerchiefs which women then chose to wear on their head, and which, like other fashions, reached such a magnitude as to provoke the poet to declare satirically—

They weigh a ton of lead.

Cicely was not fractious, that she should refuse to see favours and blessings in her hard lot, since her dear father, sister, and cousin were in all probability safe beyond seas, or she would have heard to the contrary. Best of all, she had William. Except on special and impossible occasions, he never missed the rheumy dusk and dawn; he came with so eager a step, that Cicely nervously fancied the difference from his former hard, heavy pace was enough to betray them.

He came to her with his tales of the day's achievements, the long hours' study, the light breaking in on this or that puzzled apprehension. He spoke of living interests and present men; the strife between Whitgift and Grindal; the animosity between Crook

the orator and Leland; Thomas Whitehead and Dr. Foreman, who had both of them concealed and preserved Luther's books when ordered to be burnt; Thomas Markant, less fortunate, whose book, once lost already, was doomed to be lost to the University again, and that irrecoverably; Thomas Taylor, 'a melancholy man, but excellent commentator on the Corinthians;' Thomas Morton, 'a painful preacher and profitable writer;' and Craiford, a more characteristic fellow than any, 'a better fencer than Vice-Chancellor, who cut off the hand of one Pindar, and cast out a man from the Regent-house, catching him up on his shoulders by main force.'

Master Lee wrapped in his cloak, and Cicely with her mandilion and muffler, took necessary exercise, unmarked in the throng and in the obscurity, but with light enough for her to see Oving's-inn, the ground of which was bought from the first Prioress of St. Radegund, for two shillings, or at twelve years' purchase, of twopence a year; a private house, with the public name of the Brazen George, on the site of St. Nicholas' hostel, the scholars whereof were 'as eminent for hard study as infamous for their brawlings by night;' Pythagoras House, built in the form of the Greek's beloved letter Y; the house of the good Alderman John Goldcorn; Caius's-court, and its three excellent gates, then in their pristine beauty and meaning—the Gate of Humility, low and little, opening into the street at St. Michael's church; the Gate of

Virtue, one of the best pieces of architecture, in the midst of the college; and the Gate of Honour, leading to the schools. Lee could display the proud coat-of-arms, the purple ears of amaranth, the serpents, the book—the interpretation, Wisdom embracing Learning, though he could not follow it up by pointing to the plain tomb of the founder, and the plain epitaph—

Fui Caius.

He could exhibit other tombs—that of Mr. Stafford, divinity reader, who died of the plague, caught from the dying priest whom he went to convert; that of the learned foreigner, Fagius, who, 'not agreeing with his transplanting,' withered and died in the flower of his age, at scarce forty-five years; and those of the noble youths, Henry and Charles Brandon, who perished within twelve hours of that sweating sickness imputed to the conjunction of the planets in Scorpio, but so peculiar to the natives of this country, that it was termed by strangers 'the English sweating,' on whose tragic end a book of such verses was written (in Latin) :—

Castor and Pollux, brothers pair,
Breathing first Amicle's air,
Did with Death so bargain make,
By exchange their turns to take:
Why is Fate more cruel grown
Than she formerly was known?
We of brothers had a brace,
Like to which did never grace
This our English earth before,
Nor the like shall grace it more.

Both, alas! together slain,
Death at once did murder twain.*

Then Lee would beguile the homeward way with older chronicles of the great chests containing solid gold, once deposited in the halls for the good of the University; of 'the fights, spoilings, breaking open of houses, wounding and murdering between the burgesses and scholars, and that in the very holy time of Lent;' of the miracle of the Host, superstitiously believed to have occurred in these streets, and how Master Latimer was long the cross-bearer in all solemn processions.

Lee was dazzled by his wife's beauty; in gazing on it alone, in smoothing or ruffling the dark locks, in regarding the fine line of brow and nose, in watching the full expressive mouth quiver with a smile, or tremble with a sigh, in encircling, as he alone might do, the arching neck and the taper waist, he forgot science and philosophy.

Says Burton—'It is a question much controverted by some wise men, *forma debeat plus arti an naturæ?* Whether natural or artificial objects be more powerful? but not decided: for my part, I am of opinion that, though beauty itself be a great motive, and give an excellent lustre *in sordibus,* in beggery (as a jewel on a dunghil will shine and cast its rayes), it cannot be suppressed, which Heliodorus fains of Chariclea, though she were in a begger's weeds: yet

* Thomas Fuller's *History of Cambridge.*

as it is used, artificial is of more force, and much to be preferred.'

> So toothless Ægle seems a pretty one,
> Set out with new bought teeth of Indy bone:
> So foul Lycoris, blacker than berry,
> Herself admires, now finer than cherry.

But the rector of Segrave did not know Cicely Yorke. Lee passionately admired her unadorned beauty, but he valued her understanding, inferior as it was to his own, more highly still, and only below her most affectionate and magnanimous heart.

Thus the gloomy winter expired in court and college; and while other smuggled wives were stowed away in remote country-houses, with high-walled parks and gardens, and in obscure dens in the labyrinths of cities, comely, clever, well-born, well-loved Cicely surmounted difficulties and alarms, and knitted away the time at the corner of Joyce Stacie's cottage hearth with wonderful patience, until the settlement of the curacy which should end the drawbacks to her matronhood.

William Lee was in orders, but he had not been appointed to preach in ordinary to any audience, and only applied to do so in immediate expectation of his pastoral charge. Cicely did not dare propose to go abroad to hear him, though Trinity Chapel was close at hand, and open to the public. She was not even aware that she sighed more profoundly over this denied diet of worship, and gazed more listlessly at her Bible, which she was studying

on the bench in the window, than she had ever longed after the joyous hunt over the wilds and woodlands, and gazed dolefully at her father's faithful old mare Brown Bess, and their frisky, rough pony Rover, until her hostess gruffly aroused her with the proposal that she would take charge of her to the chapel, asserting roundly that she was sufficient to warden her. She would certainly not propose to raise her spirits at the bear-garden, or any other vanity, but if ever a hearer were to profit by a preacher or gospeller, as they called them when she was young, and the second name was better than the first, it ought to be a wife who listened to the lecture of her goodman. She'd warrant none would accost them in the bit they had to go, but if they did, she could silence most talkers.

Cicely brightened immensely at the offer, and took the terms in which it was made as the very highest compliment that could have been paid to her, poor child; at the same time she began to understand Mother Stacie too well to thank her.

Cicely and Mother Stacie stepped forth accordingly, when the bells were ringing, and they had only to turn the corner, cross the kennel, and enter the grand gateway—which Cicely regarded with awe and veneration, and not without a secret fear that it might fall and crush her in the presence of the congregation. The couple were scarcely in the style which old Sir Richard Maitland satirized,

Some time they will beir up their gown,
To show their wilicoat hingan down;
And some time baith they will up-bear,
To show their hose of black or brown;
And all for newfangliness of geir.
Their collars, carcats, and hause-beidis,
With velvet hat heigh on their heidis,
Cordit with gold, like ane yunkeir,
Braidit about with golden threadis;
And all for newfangliness of geir.
Their shoon of velvet and their muilis!
In kirk they are not content of stuilis,
The sermon when they sit to heir,
But carries cusheons, like vain fulis;
And all for newfangliness of geir—

but in biggins of the cheapest and simplest, like a respectable poor man's wife and her bonny strapping daughter. They had no right to look at any of the grand pews, but neither were they on the poor's benches—they had seats among the humbler tradesmen and huxters' families, who appeared in patches among the fenced-off students.

At that day Puritanism—not yet blighted or rendered rank, ere Brownists and Barrowists had pushed it far beyond its original limits, and that far-sounding voice had proclaimed that 'Presbyter was but old priest writ large'—ran high at Cambridge, although it was opposed by no less an authority than the proud Whitgift, Master of Trinity, formerly Fellow of Peter's House, afterwards Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of Canterbury; munificent patron of various colleges; the second Wolsey, whose magnificence was boldly censured by Aylmer,

Bishop of London, to whom he replied with a taunt on the sex of some of the metropolitan prelate's suite—Whitgift, like his mistress, favouring the celibacy of the clergy, and perhaps going further than the Queen in his contempt for, and aversion to women—who rode with 'one hundred foot and fifty horse' of his own servants, trained and armed; and in his progresses to Canterbury had his escort 'swollen to above a thousand by gentlemen volunteers,' who was to humble for the time his jaundiced rival, Cartwright, and break the heart of his predecessor, Grindal, the martyr of simple honesty and manly tolerance.

The system of preaching, styled sometimes 'the liberty of prophesying,' prevailing then in the Puritan party of the Church of England was so plain, whether practical or not, that warm complaints were issued against it, as 'a licentiouse, contestiouse mode of preaching,' wherein the speaker 'particularlie described and named men of all degree, both honourable that be absent and those that be present, according to the licence of the old poetes,' admonishing the Parliament, assailing the constitution, perhaps sparing the Queen's sacred majesty, perhaps not. One can fancy the piquancy of these addresses, and how little room there was for drowsiness when an attack on one's self or beloved next neighbour might point the fiercest paragraph, or conclude the crowning peroration. So attractive was such inflaming and earthly matter, that in the chapel of St.

Mary's, at no distant date, the sexton took down the windows for relief to the crowd who pressed to hear the audacious and incorrigible Fellow. Another guess sermon was that of Master Hugh Latimer, in little St. Edward's, when he likewise, but in a different sort, enchained a multitude on the question of the priests to the Baptist, 'Who art thou?' when he conformed his argument to a game at cards, constituting the heart trumps. Lee was not so popular, neither was his lecture of similar stuff, and so best, for truly 'he will make bad music who hath the instrument and fiddlestick, but none of the rosin;' but his reputation for uncommon parts and learning was sufficiently established, and his address, though somewhat elaborate and extravagant, had real eloquence to fix his listeners.

Master Lee had, indeed, been accustomed rather to dumbfounder the public with the atmosphere he breathed, thin, and rarefied, and wondrous cold for a Christian man. But he had learnt lately an unconscious trick of introducing falls into some space warmer and softer, which went straight to men's hearts, melting the hammered, hardened walls that imprisoned them, and surprising and startling himself as much as he struck others. The young Fellow was far from easy under the new, uncalculated power; but his occasional faltering and awkwardness, grafted on his intellectual supremacy, only impressed people more vividly.

Cicely felt it all, saw it all; his influence, his gifts.

How grateful—how glad she was! and yet there came upon her at that moment the first bitter, cutting sense of her false and cruel position. No approving, congratulatory eyes turned upon her, no gossips' nods, filling her with happy, proud confusion. Little any one guessed her right to listen and to applaud. She did not venture so much as to look fairly at the centre of all regards, lest her presence, in place of pleasing him, should shock him with the trouble and degradation which so simple a thing might involve.

Cicely hung her head and cried, though Mother Stacie was observing her with her hawk's eyes; notwithstanding, she forgot it all when she was once more safe in the porter's cottage, and hailed Lee's arrival with sparkling eyes and bounding heart.

'Will Lee, did I ever think thou couldst preach so experimental a sermon? I knew thou wert a rare scholar, but where didst find thine unction, thy homely nature between whiles, that brought the water to folks' eyes? Now God be praised for the talents he has given thee, that made thy holding forth as acceptable a diet as ever I attended. Methought thou wast transformed into a white-headed divine, who had weathered the storms and the sunshine of half a century. I heard other folks' opinions that squared with mine. Ah! they did not know before whom they said them. 'That marvel mellows,' reported one. 'He has my permission,' hummed another. 'I hate a stuck-up judge, an he don't

ripen too suddenly and too soon, which is not wholesome, neighbour, as thou knowest to thy stomach's cost of thy harvest beer—but I allow Master Lee caught many comprehensions to-night, and that very modestly at times—a quality which I have not observed in him heretofore, but which is a safe ingredient in a public teacher.' '

'Leave alone their speeches. Didst thou hear me preach, Cicely? No, it could not be, it was beyond thy bounds,' cried Lee, with equal elation and excitement.

'Marry, that did I, sir, by the kindness of a friend,' declared Cicely, glancing slyly at Mother Stacie's stiff back. 'Eh! thou didst not divine, for as clever as thou art, that thou wast discoursing to thy wife amongst others.'

'And wert pleased, Cicely? What didst think of my performance, moppet?'

That Lee should address gracious Cicely so! why, her father had not gone beyond daughter, and child, and chick on occasions. These husbands, open or under the rose, are the levellers, and women laugh at and love the fond levelling—the cleverest and brightest always the best, bending their necks the most meekly, kissing the patronizing hand the most devoutly. 'Did my sermon meet thy views? Was it a reasonably fair production? Come, Cicely, honestly, thy mind upon it. How did I do? I thought not ill; yet I wondered at myself sometimes,' urged Lee, with an eager, open, overflowing,

touching vanity, that, as well as his disorder, might have disarmed the critics.

The sullen, grumbling, fretting first months of the year were past—the merry month of May was at hand, and it was close on the falling out of the modest benefice which had long been declared all but vacant. The incumbent, who had promised for an age to resign it, on his appointment to a chaplaincy, was just about to put his laudable purpose into execution. The case was expected to be concluded on a certain day, and Master Lee was certified that his name stood senior on the list, always excepting those who declined to avail themselves of so small a preferment, and waive their claims to bigger loaves and fishes. The appointment was far different from Lee's hopes, when Alma Mater was his mistress, under divine philosophy and sublime science; but his opinions were modified for the nonce, like those of his fellow-men, and he was now fain to accept what would alone render his future course certainly practicable. It was not wonderful, although it was a little mortifying, that Lee, so true-hearted in the main, and Cicely, really good and religious-minded, should, in their strong interest in the subject, and in those direct, unscrupulous, trenchant times, when men and women ordinarily stuck at nothing, good or evil, saw no flaw in the reasoning which induced Lee to aim at a responsible situation for his own ends, and to attempt God's work as a makeshift for his own hire; and truly the couple

meant to do their duty in the sacred calling to which they appointed themselves, it is only more than likely that, in default of singleness of sight, they mistook their ability. There would be a little amaze and ridicule at the anchorite student, which he did not greatly enjoy by anticipation; and, perhaps, if his bishop were autocratical, and opposed to Puritanism, like the Dean of Trinity—a sharp censure—but Elizabeth herself would inflict no more here; and a clandestine adventure of wedlock was so common, that the penalty of the worse half of the fault would not be one whit greater. The world, though a rough enough world, was not so demoniacally subtle in its slander, but that it ordinarily took such things as it found them. Master Lee had wedded privately ere he was strictly warranted in taking the liberty of disposing of himself—silly man and prevaricator, fie! But a fair enough face to excuse a Professor's, let-a-be a Fellow's fancy. He had stopped his own promotion——and so had many a pretty lad and wiseacre on a less temptation.

The burden of the song, 'We have brought the summer home,' had rung through the sunny air. Mayday had been celebrated at Cambridge with pageants by the professors and students, and dances and garlands for the people. Birch-trees, with their silver bark and tender green tassels, were in the utmost favour, lilies were still left till midsummer; the goodly oxen, with the sweet nosegays on their horns, drew home the Maypole; flags and handker-

chiefs flew in the wind, and green halls and bowers rose on every side, until 'each field grew a street, and each street a park.' The bounding ring swung joyously hither and thither; the Lady of the May sat in her arbour bestowing on this youngster a carved hook, on that her garter, and gracing another with her cherry lips. The night fell, and the Lord of the May led the wilder revels, which temperate men forsook with the sun.

Men said the Mayings and May-games were falling off in the country towns as in London, though St. Andrew's Maypole, called 'the under-shaft,' on Cornhill, soaring above the steeple, painted in different colours, and covered with bushes of flowers and herbs, and all astir with streamers, was still a by-word. People would have it the gaiety would never again be so lusty as when Henry himself went a Maying with Queen Catherine on Shooter's-hill—before so many sorrows and sins—that it had never recovered the misfortune of the Evil May-day when Wolsey, having grounds for apprehending a massacre of the foreigners, and Sir. John Mundy, alderman, coming from his ward, and finding two young men in Chepe playing at bucklers against the command for all honest citizens to keep their houses till nine o'clock in the morning, and ordering them to desist, and threatening them with the Compter, was resisted by the well-known cry of 'Prentices, Prentices! Clubs, Clubs!' which was the signal for a general riot, at whose height Sir Roger Cholmeley, the

lieutenant of the Tower, fired off against the city several pieces of ordnance whose smoke was not cleared away for many days. Still Robin Hood was always burly and brown, and red and white Maid Marian very buxom.

Cicely was not present. She was too anxious, yet cheerily so, to care for the season's amusements. She was pleased to sit at home and think of the stolen walks—the first lover's walks with which Will had indulged the country-bred girl, pining wearily for the fresh-budding hawthorn—to the Heretic's Walk, and the King's Ditch, and the Leas, the Campus Martius, where the students exercised themselves at quarter-staff, bucklers, and shooting at the target in the early mornings and the late twilights. She was thankful beyond reckoning that she might soon be seen with him at church and market, hearth and board, without challenge. Cicely watched long for Lee's arrival with the welcome tidings; fancied how he would announce to her their provision and settlement, and kiss her, and cry he would proclaim her his own before all men that minute. She conned over for the hundredth time the slender accommodation of their future home, the stone porch, like that of Barne-elms, for the wayfarer, the parlour, kitchen, and sleeping-closet, the herb-garden, and the barley and grass fields, which she should manage with any curate's wife in England, the stray pet lamb which should form the seedling of a bleating flock, the sturdy calf, which

should grow into a peaceful, milk-laden cow—why, they might attain surplaiths of wool and scores of kine, and she would spin and weave falding and camlet, blankets and foot-cloths, besides what she would exchange for black cloth of lyre, morrey, and medley; their butter and cheese, and solid beeves would be sent to market, and bring them in scores of nobles and half nobles, angels and portcullis crowns, down to silver groats, to buy Will books, and change some of their beechen cups and platters into burnished silver, until, while they lived honestly and piously, and relieved their poor brethren, they rose at last to their old rank of squires; for was not Will of the knightly Lees of Ditchley, and she a Yorke of Barne-elms? Ah, well-a-day! Cicely, dream on; 'thou didst not guess it was a dangerous game, or compass, poor lass, its selfishness or mercenariness, and thy vision was too soon disturbed by Lee's low, familiar knock. Lee entered, haggard, distrait. He was so often there that the Stacies took no notice of him beyond a passing 'good day.' He walked twice up and down the dark cumbered floor, and he covered his face with his hands, 'Not yet, my wife, not yet,' and so off.

Cicely knew at once with a great pang that his chance had failed, and the curacy was lost.

Lee was a veritable student, and what are the signs by which you may know him? According to one of his class, he belonged to a set of 'silly, soft fellows in their outward behaviour; absurd, ridi-

culous to others, and no whit experienced in worldly business; they can measure the heavens, range over the world, teach others wisdom, and yet in bargains and contracts they are circumvented by every base tradesman.' Not inconsistent, though more amiable, is the testimony of Pliny. 'He is yet a scholar, than which kind of men there is nothing so simple, so sincere, none better; they are most part harmless, honest, upright, innocent, plain-dealing men.' Lee, either from too great sanguineness, or some other deception, had reckoned without his host. He had been in error about his precedence, or else he had been cheated, and some man had played the hypocrite, for another Fellow was named to the vacant living, and he was left to wait a second dreary vigil for the next prize.

Cicely's heart was sick and sore, not so much with hope deferred, as with a new sense of ill done, and punishment impending. Had they been much to blame —ah! she feared it, she very much feared it—in the infringement of Lee's bond, and the delusion impressed on the governors? Still they but broke a Papist provision, they wronged no man, they defrauded no man. What! not the bachelor who was entitled to Lee's number in Trinity?

It was too nice a question for fond woman's partial judgment—this lie they passed on the public, but surely it seemed somewhat of a pious lie from her, for the maintaining it kept her in humiliation and degradation, the giving it up quenched for

ever Lee's aspirations, and extinguished his high hopes.

Had she been light of nature, and lightly won—were good Master Yorke, her dear, dear father, wayward, warm-hearted. Nan, gallant Dick, to Goody Grizel and Goodman Gil, the kindly old circle of Barne-elms that had surrounded her from her childhood, too soon forgotten for the ardent endearments of the hermit-scholar, whose love for her had only plunged him in a dire slough?

Cicely was stricken to the heart, and Mother Stacie saw it, just as she conjectured the frustration of the deliverance of the pair, which they had bruited in the fulness of their expectations. Mother Stacie was a singular woman; she belonged to the old townspeople of Cambridge; she had their blood and spirit; though her only child aspired to be a University-man, and she was grateful to Lee for promoting his wishes, she had no sympathy with clerks; all her original prejudices ran counter to them; she sneered at them as hang-byes, in defiance of her husband's dependence upon them, raising herself and him above the shifts and wants of poverty; she could not square her opinions to her interests, though she might have shaped them by her principles. Old Joyce's deafness was lucky in this instance, as it freed him from the precarious post of defending his employers. Mother Stacie liked to tell Cicely of the old brawls and struggles for power between the tradesmen and the populace on the one

hand, and the scholars on the other. She boasted how the former had once burst into the Chancellor's house, broke the University charter's seals with their clubs, and burnt them in the market-place, one Margaret Stirr, a mad old woman, scattering their ashes with the words: 'Thus, thus let the learning of all scholars be confounded.' If she had toleration, it was for the College of Corpus Christi, the offspring of the two guilds; and she relaxed her severity to describe its old processions, and half forgot her reformed doctrines while she bewailed the glories of the famous pyx called 'the Gripe's Eye,' and John Goldcorn's cup, of which all must drink at those yearly dinners, whereof the town's authorities had been deprived, and which she approved of their well-nigh wresting back at the sword's point. She swore there had only been one great doctor among them, and that was Master Galfrid, who paved the town, and to whom King Edward granted a toll for five years. She reminded Cicely that the merchants of Cambridge were free at all fairs, and entitled to place themselves in the van of pitched battles.

Therefore, though Lee was the earlier friend, and it was from his purse that she received all the remuneration she would deign to accept for Cicely's expenses, Mother Stacie soon developed a preference for the wife over the husband; and being not deficient in her own peculiar sense and benevolence, she exerted herself at this crisis, in her harsh way, to put the wrong right, and prevent greater mischief.

'Doth not Master Lee think of some other way of doing than getting on to be a doctor in one of the colleges, since he be now disqualified by rights from being one of the sixty gentlemen whom that foolish lad Joyce be ever envying?' she asked abruptly one morning, as she cleared away her dishes, when Cicely sat sorrowfully, her hands in her lap, and the two womanfolk were alone in the cottage, on one of those bright May mornings that affronted Cicely with their cloudless sunshine.

'I do not know; he hath not mooted a change to me,' answered Cicely, dryly, for the aching heart in its unsoundness was swift to take umbrage.

'But surely he be taking steps to do you justice, and gain the means of maintaining you in a more likely fashion,' persisted Mother Stacie, striking her blows home.

'I have told you he has not instructed me in his designs,' retorted Cicely, pettishly, the tears filling her brown eyes.

'Hist! Mistress,' exclaimed Mother Stacie, quickly, pointing her thumb at Cicely; 'it is not for thee to sit still in this matter; every honest woman is bound to assert her honesty; an she trust it to a man alone, she may go pack to a white sheet and the church aisle, ere he find time and opportunity to give her what he will swear at last is her due.'

'I will not hear vile aspersion of my husband's honour,' cried Cicely, blazing out violently. 'If

you want to get rid of me, mother, tell me so in plain terms, and I will save you further trouble, but don't dare to doubt or decry Master Lee.'

'How now, Mistress Lee? Favours are soon forgotten. Who is the bold one here to suspect me of niggardliness and double-dealing, and Master Lee the benefactor of my boy Joyce—though I see not how the lad is bettered by having his freak granted, and being made to differ from his fathers, taught to read print books, and eat flesh every day of his life, finding it mighty hard to come by. Natheless, I admit the obligation every hour I draw breath,' declared Mother Stacie, with little less loftiness.'

'Forgive me, oh! forgive me, mother,' cried Cicely, penitently. 'I believe you mean me well; but you cannot understand all that I owe, or half that I feel.'

'If you believe that I mean you well, madam, better follow my counsel, though I be a simple body, and do not guess half your riddles. I can see this much, that you are prolonging a disguise which will end in spite of you, it may be with a shock which will inflict a damage that can never be mended on all concerned. As I am Master Lee's servant, and took you in purely for his sake, and yet now speak to you on your own account, you may credit my wisdom, though I am an unlettered woman, come of handicraftsmen, and you be gently born and bred.'

'Ah! well, Mother Stacie,' sighed Cicely, pathetically, 'it is because you speak for my sake that I do.

not listen to you. I cannot injure Will, I will not ruin Will.'

'Good lack! wench,' exclaimed Mother Stacie, losing all patience, rolling up her striped apron, with her iron-grey hair standing on end under her head-gear, 'thy wits be wool-gathering, I think. Wilt lead thy man into temptation, and call that no injury? Wilt go the surest way to soil his name with sin, and blacken his heart with remorse, and then mint at saving him from ruin?'

But Cicely was deluded. Perhaps a nature like hers, once led out of the straight way, is, from its very strength and fulness, harder to recall than a weaker spirit, a more querulous, exacting humour. 'He took me when I was desolate, I will never press and constrain him. I have no fear of Will Lee. I said I would trust to his truth; it is not for me to question it. I will bide his time.'

'E'en as you will, mistress; you should know best,' assented Mother Stacie, ironically. 'And prithee keep in mind that others bear Master Lee gratitude besides thyself, and that his whole kith and kin and dependents are entitled to claim harbour here.'

But Cicely found to her cost that she had fallen immeasurably in Mother Stacie's good graces by slighting her opinion. Joyce Stacie's goodwife was one of those persons who could not endure contradiction; and, moreover, her shrewdness and few strong, deeply-toned notions condemned her lodger's

strait. Henceforth the mistress of the house merely tolerated Cicely as the toy and torment of Master Lee.

William Lee did not propose any other alternative than their always more difficult concealment; he bemoaned it, and he looked gloomy enough at the necessity, but old influences were too much for him. Once having proposed to himself the union of the two opposing currents, or at least the direction of their course to the same result, he could not tear from himself the possibility of the double fulfilment of his desire and completion of his being. At the same time he never wavered in his love for Cicely; his concentrated, adhesive nature was no more capable of satiety and infidelity than it was of wide sympathy and forethought. As he had said, he was not gentle, he was not watchful for others; he might be guilty of a higher kind of selfishness. An absent, isolated, burdened man was the student Lee, but he was essentially and remarkably constant in his tastes and affections.

Neither did Lee's desire for Cicely's society lessen, though it was gratified at a risk that never diminished, but rather grew with every hour of their union, and their short, stated intercourse during those ripening summer months was more and more uncertain, and darkened in its atmosphere. The brief period of forgetfulness of all in each other, and perfect happiness in the mere fact, so strange to them at first, of their sudden conjunction, and close

perpetual alliance, was over, and a change had come upon both, more than the usual transformation of wedded lovers awakening to the humble, common, safe, blessed crosses and trials of life. An unexplained consciousness—a care was rising up between them. A sore doubt—a jealousy was dawning in the most confiding, generous spirit in the world, and a worrying, wearing, miserable dissatisfaction and discontent haunting it, for which Cicely hated herself. A vague pain and vexation, a restless, chafing resentment, an imperious defiance was gnawing at the calm heart, and pricking the active brain of the scholar. Oh! false positions which help to bring apostasy on the best-endowed children of the Creator.

Cicely's well-poised character lost its balance. She pursued her narrow, personal industry, the trifling spinning and knitting, without any purpose, by fits and snatches; she became capricious, captious, unequal in spirits, ailing in body. She sickened at the Stacie's cottage, not so much at its class, at the absence of all luxury and refinement, as at the unbroken confinement, the irksome precautions, of her forbidden existence—forbidden, as Will Lee's equal and partner.

Lee wondered, and blundered, and fretted, though he did not fail, at this alteration in his mistress—one effort which he made, a clumsy, unpremeditated, half-instinctive attempt to atone for a cruel injury, which he refused to regard as other than unavoidable,

and which only made matters worse, was to coax and tease poor Cicely by loading her with gifts, as hard come by, as improper and cumbrous, as a poor, dreaming, eccentric man could plague himself and others withal—missals which were only valuable to himself, and a gaudy parrot, like that which poor Nan had coveted, and a marmoset, which, chained in the corner of the narrow room, executed such antics as rendered its immediate withdrawal imperative, and in the meanwhile mowed so abominably as nearly to shake Cicely's country nerves. It was a marvel that he did not add a pacing horse, in oblivion of the absence of stable accommodation. Yet it was certain that he did not forget green herbs and boughs for Cicely's doves, which he had carried off with her on that memorable night, though he sometimes gazed at them wistfully, as if they remained emblems of the peace which was already departing from his rash emprise.

Cicely sometimes received his tokens kindly, sometimes as languidly and unpropitiously as any fine lady, she who was wont to be so tender. He did not know—he never knew unless by a guess—how those simple, injudicious expressions of his fondness sometimes stung her.

'Here be fine gloves for my lady,' Master Lee would say, unfolding from his scarf a gay pair of hawking gloves of delicate doeskin, beflowered with silk and gold thread.

Cicely was in a great flurry as to the imprudence

and danger of such a purchase, for what could Master Lee seek with that feminine commodity; and when he assured her that he had bought them from a travelling merchant, and that he (Lee) might have ten wives for what the pedler would care, Cicely answered flightily, that it might be he would like as many wives as the Turk or the Muscovite, if he saw as little of the others as he did of her. And when Lee pressed to know if she liked his bargain, she evaded his evident longing for thanks, while she covertly admired the choice work, by asserting that she did not need a covering for her hands now-a-days —they were fair enow, and she held up the little sun-burnt hands of Barne-elms, blanched to a waxen paleness; and she went on moralizing, and coinciding so curiously with Lee's old thought, how much was done with a hand—it could work, it could buffet, it could beg; but perhaps the maddest thing that ever it did was when it laid itself in another hand, to have and to hold, for better for worse.

Peradventure she regretted her own complacency in this respect, Master Lee suggested, in a nettled tone; for he was no longer the adoring lover, but the condescending husband.

She never said so, but his thought might be the master-builder that constructed that idea.

And Master Lee departed in dudgeon; then be sure Cicely's contumacy yielded, and she repented and wept her peevishness.

But though Master Lee and his young wife would

part coldly, yet they sought another meeting as eagerly, and clung together as firmly, as in the first lustrous moon that shone in on their appointments, and made itself a party to their secret that they were one.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DISCOVERY.

IT was Midsummer. Because St. John was 'a burning and a shining light,' and in condescension to certain old heathen practices, the air had been all a-flame that long, long eve, with the bonfire, the wood fire, and St. John's fire. An eye-witness wrote that 'London was one wood or garden,' and the 'young men with the maids did dance in every street,' though Henry no longer traversed Chepe in the coat of one of his guards, or 'set the watch' in kingly guise, preceding the cresset-bearers, the constables, the henchmen, the mayor and sheriffs, and giants, while the windows were lined with peer and gay lady, through the whole course of the procession. Motherwort, vervain, lilies and violets, were bandied by the humblest revellers; the orpine, or midsummer-men, was planted by the people in 'pots, shells, or on timbers, slates and trenchers daubed with clay, and so set or hung up in their houses.' Cicely procured two plants, and stuck

them, unobserved, in a trough, and was soothed and pleased, poor heart, because they obligingly bent towards each other of their own accord, as the contrary inclination forefended separation between the lovers they represented.

Will Lee and Cicely had grown bold in the impunity with which they had executed their purpose, and in the oblivion which rested on Lee's connexion with the Stacies' cottage, overlooked by the authorities, or reckoned beneath their notice, and unsuspected, or talked of as a mere scandal by his busy companions, whom Lee's reserve and Cicely's circumspectness had as yet succeeded in foiling, when they would have penetrated the mystery.

Cicely had been once, twice within the very walls of awful Trinity. On the first occasion it had been through the wild extravagance of Lee, exultant in his gain, unbounded in his devotion to Cicely, foolhardily incredulous of accident. The old verger had been suborned to his aid by young Joyce, whose scholarship did not prevent him from being smart and ready, who was attached to Lee, and, after three glimpses, the slave of Lee's young, unacknowledged wife. When smuggled within the bounds of Lee's college rooms, Cicely was such a girl, so excitable as to treat the matter as half a frolic, and needed to stifle her laughter as well as her interest in the scene. Young Joyce, the main conspirator, though not the principal in the affair, was instigated to more insane liberties. But the ancient man only shook his head

like a mandarin, and stuck fast to his theory—'This comes of the books, overmuch wisdom and then dizziness—wine, or weapons, or petticoats. Better anyhow than the books; sooner a young man's fall than a crazed man's crotchet—it brought merry Master Latimer to the faggots—ay, sir, you that study, 'ware the books.'

The second visit was to solder one of these early quarrels, when infatuated Cicely, untrained to guile, counting the familiar hours, and selecting the time when Lee lingered a moment in the hall after the dismissal of his pupils, in the disguise of her hood and cloak, tripped out of the shade of the plum-trees, full-grown when Milton's mulberry was unplanted, where she had ensconced herself behind the dovecot, and, watching her opportunity, slipped through the deserted courts, past the statue of King Edward in full armour, up the broad stairs, and altogether scared at her effrontery, and panting like a lapwing, fell into Lee's arms as he issued from the great room to seek his accustomed cell. What could Lee do but caress, scold, and hurry her to his retreat, loving, blaming, half applauding, too, poor fellow, in the solace to his wounded pride, and the satisfaction to his fervent affection, mingling with his serious alarm at the reckless, but single-hearted step.

According to Lee and Cicely's account of themselves afterwards—in order to insure their escape—that the old vesper bell might ring for supper ere he saw her out—or possibly in very illusion, for the one

was a woman, the other a scholar, the two dallied together, wasting the precious seconds, with unheard-of wilfulness.

When Lee's arm was round Cicely, and he stood still by her side, suffering her to bend down and turn over the papers on his table—then forewarned of the student's dereliction, apprised of his present enormity, flaming with wrath, armed with power, without a chance afforded the staunchest and ablest adherent of spiriting them away, or conveying to them a suspicion of what was upon them—the Dean of Trinity's terrible step sounded in the corridor.

Without a single 'By your leave,' or a second's civil hesitation, the unfastened door was flung open by an imperious hand—a dark, stern face, a haughty carriage, and a hood and surplice presented themselves before the astounded pair. Cicely was covered with shame and terror, Master Lee stood dumb and motionless.

'Sir, sir,' cried the arrogant Father, stammering with fury, 'what monstrous wantonness, what unheard-of, pestilent immorality is this? Dost know Oxford was once emptied by an accident to a worthless woman—three innocent, ignorant men hanged by command of King John—three thousand left the University next day; no such calamity shall befall Cambridge. What! Parsons and Bagshaw were dismissed from the Oxford of our day on a less guilty business—a wise example! and the Queen's

Grace will sooner forgive a lamentable lapse into Romanism than a villanous profligacy indulged with a rare grossness within the very walls of her grave and reverend college.'

'Master Doctor, this is my chamber,' cried out Lee.

'This is no man's chamber, if it is made a refuge for light women, and there is no limit to my jurisdiction where I am avised of fraud and wickedness,' retorted the priest, stamping with his foot. 'Hast never heard the royal injunction, issued after the Queen's first gracious progress—when she, a pure and spotless lady, was incensed and scandalized to find the cathedrals and colleges swarming with women and children—'that no head or member of any college or cathedral should bring a wife or any other woman into the precincts of it, to abide in the same, on the pain of forfeiture of all ecclesiastical promotion.' Fie on thee, Master Lee, for this is a more scurrilous affair—out of my sight with thy disgraceful ware; and look to it, master, that you do not hear of this great transgression another day.'

Lee raised his head and made a step forward, but Cicely sprang towards him, and whispered with a sob in his ear—'Say, Will, that I am thy sister.' Heaven forgive her! and Heaven alone knows what—save a wild false echo of the history of the patriarchs—prompted the unhappy girl to this fresh stratagem and plain falsehood; and yet—and yet her heart died within her when she proposed it to

her husband, as if the perception flashed upon her that her fate hung on a thread.

There is one gulf, and only one, beyond which, in spite of the piteous ballad of the Not-browne Mayde, strong nature interferes and prevents a true woman's love reaching. There depended on Lee's answer, not only infamy or honour, retribution or atonement, but his wife's esteem or contempt—the purification and perfection of her first love, or the hateful development and maturity of that element of discord and alienation already rife between them. On Lee's breath hovered their destiny—that was the turning-point of their history—whether their mutual sin should be repented and assoilized, or whether it should close around them and drag them down until not only uprightness but fair humanity was lost.

It is true that Cicely dragged down the scales, it is also true that if he resisted her and proved loyal, she would wail over the sorrow she had wrought her Will. She would vow that she would have suffered any indignity, submitted to any slander, done penance in her innocence, walked barefoot over thorns, and been foully spit upon to save her Will, to preserve to him the hopes and aims of his manhood; but for all that her heart leaped with thankfulness, her integrity blessed him for evermore —when pushing her roughly from him, crying out sharply, as if she hurt him, 'What ails thee, woman, that thou shouldst burden thyself and me with

greater falsehood? Wouldst verily defame thyself and me? It suiteth not with my credit that it should be so—nay, I should never master another page, or write another line. Dr. Whitgift, this is my wedded wife.'

The Dean did start, but his thin lips curled only with a more malignant sneer, and his eyes glowed with a more triumphant fierceness. Here was an easier and more complete victory over the Puritan champion Lee than he had even dreamt.

'Ah! is it so, Master Lee? My greeting to thy dame, of whom I crave pardon. But though marriage is honourable, it is a state whose common joys priests may hardly—Fellows *never* taste. I wish you joy, sir, as a bridegroom; long life and prosperity to you; and of course it is a small matter, oh! a grain of sand or seed of thistledown that your name be struck off the list of Fellows. Reckon it so from the hour of those nuptials, of which you forgot to inform me. It is good fortune that I stumbled upon them, sparing your modesty, else there might have been another scene to this delectable, virtuous play—a repetition of the Oxford tragedy with variations. What think you of Leicester's Rheum? the falling away of nails and hair, and a charge of murder against the college that thy Bible too might be complete.' For Dr. Whitgift spurned at any over-lord, and besides it was well known that in politics the royal favourite leant to the Puritan side.

It was a hap that murder did not occur then and

there within the Fellow's chamber, in the aggrieved woman's presence, while the ruthless superior's taunts fell like burning brands on the fallen servant. Lee gnashed his teeth impotently, but composure returned with the very excess of the affront.

'You press me too hard, Mr. Dean,' he compelled himself to say calmly. 'Have mercy on contrite sinners. I acknowledge my offence; I see it now as most men do when their errors are brought home to them in the light of other men's judgments. I am aware that I have broken the college rules—and no final term of chambers, pupils, and commons, will be permitted to a married Fellow as it was to the Papist Bagshaw. Good lack!' he exclaimed, bitterly, 'a Fellow is not to have natural affections, call them infirmities, though a Jew be suffered to own the same.'

'I was a Fellow, sir, in my day,' pronounced the Dean, superciliously, 'and I experienced no deprivation.' (Verily it was credible.)

'Enough; I only know I would not have the concession if it were offered me. I am punished for what I took under a false pretence. I would I could give my noble college back the maintenance of the last few months, as I thank it with a full heart for the spiritual provision of years. Yes, Dr. Whitgift, I am no recreant son of Trinity, or Cambridge. She owns me! she owns me! even while she thrusts me forth. No need of force to expel me, and though sorrowing, belike I am not an unhappy man. It is

as you said first, and your last savage insult falls clean to the ground; for when it comes to the trial I am willing to resign Alma Mater for my wife. Alma Mater is the father and mother I leave. Doctor, you are acquainted with the Scripture? No fear that I shall live to repudiate what I have bought so dear. Come, wife, this is our second flight, but we are rich yet—in each other.' And so vindicating his smothered manhood, all in a flush of generous remorse and renewed truth and faith, Lee marched out with his wife clinging to his supporting arm, without looking once behind him, followed by marvelling, mocking, condemning, condoling eyes, with Whitgift virulently gathering in his gown, that it might not contract defilement from contact with the culprits.

That very night the ex-Fellow walked publicly among the company on the Leas with his wife on his arm, and lifted his cap and bowed punctiliously, with marked admission of his identity at every encounter with a curious acquaintance. And, for the first time, he took notice of every wilding rose in the brake, and water ranunculus on the pool, and glow-worm by the pathway; and loitered and gathered posies, and talked of the summer sky and the coming harvest-moon, and volunteered greetings to the country people, and whistled back again to the throstle, and laughed at Cicely's blushing face—like a happy fool in his freedom.

Cicely was wondrously happy on that her real

bridal night, exulting in his fine spirit, his independence, his content—fancying that he had been less a prey to ambition than she had deemed, supposing that he had only to know simple pleasures to be captivated with them; and, after all, were they not the sweetest, purest, most abiding?—ignoring, silly woman, simple child, that this mood of his was no disciplined moderation of mind, tested, and tried, and deliberately assumed as his portion, that this temper was too probably the intoxicating fumes of fever, concealing weakness—a spurious condition, a deceptive lightness; above all, with womanly bigotry and narrowness closing her eyes to the fact that—

> A dream of power once broken,
> What can give peace again?

that a conscious calling is not relinquished, extraordinary talents are not allowed to rust, without at least the faintness of a moral vacuum, the spasms of a spiritual cramp.

As Lee and Cicely returned to their temporary lodging, where Mother Stacie herself prepared to receive them with a vast increase of ceremony, a lull stealing over their excitement, a quietness succeeding their vehemence—a large, heavy, mild-looking man stepped aside from a knot of satellites, unheeding, or rather determinedly provoking their comments, walked up to the notorious couple, and tapped Lee on the arm. 'Master Lee,'—he addressed him with a little constitutional nervousness

in his utterance, but a full, brave radiance in his grey eyes,—'I am sorry, I am heartily sorry, that I cannot annul this sentence, or I fear excuse the evasion of a law framed by those who had the best right to make their requirements, by manifest imposition. Bear with me, sir,' catching at Lee's coat, 'I am a plain man—a divine, from whose lips nought but truth should issue; but I grant that it is hard on a young man, and, doubtless, temptation will enter, and vigilance will sleep, and worse sins are consented to every day—so I do not judge and condemn thee. I trust madam will make up for much. I hear she is a daughter of worthy, learned Master Yorke of Barne-elms, and left, somehow, in his emergency, sadly uncontrolled and unprovided for—lost sight of in this uncharitable world. Be good, madam, as they tell me you are fair. My sight is somewhat feeble, and the sun is low; but methinks I can catch a feature of my little sister Dorothy (ah! merry little sister Dolly), for whom I could have died, we will not say how many years ago—when I was a rash lad, and she had no other friend—a trick of the countenance—a dimple—the sweep of the eyebrow, I like to behold it again. Ha! Master Lee, thou didst not think me a gallant and a courtier! Well, madam, teach him that he is forgiven for his licence; and, Master Lee, if I can aid thee by counsel or recommendation, so thou dost think of taking pupils or delivering lectures privately, command me.'

Lee's pale cheek crimsoned, and he bowed low and stood uncovered: 'My Lord, I have offended grievously; I care not to confess it to you, though I may carry a high head to others, and for my life I cannot regret the whole matter. You have judged right; she was not to blame. The man is the leader in these cases, the woman the tool, or the creature of circumstances. I shall be proud of your patronage; there is not a man in the world to whom I would be sooner beholden—to counting myself thy bondsman.'

'No thanks, Master Lee, no thanks. Believe me, I am conscious of enough laxity in my own walk to feel warranted in wishing thee well for all that is gone. A fair good e'en, good e'en;' and wise, gentle Grindal moved hastily away, as one who did not care to stand blandly, and listen to his own commendation.

It so happened that his charity and benevolence were not called into exercise on this couple's behalf, and no instance given of the comparative strength of the enmity of rancorous Dr. Whitgift, pitted against the philanthropy of tender-hearted Dr. Grindal. As it was, the future Archbishop soon needed all his philosophy and meekness on his own account, to stand between him and the disapprobation of her who could, when aroused, write to her Bishop, 'By God, I will unfrock you,' breaking forth at his cherished, unabated principles, to endure the heartburnings and humiliation of his resignation,

happily ended by his death. But his works did follow him, and William Lee and Cicely long retained the balm of his sympathy, the mercy of his reproof; it softened their proud hearts, it melted their stubborn tempers, it nerved them to endure the world's mingled harshness and indifference without turning and standing at bay. It seemed as if the faithful servant had hurried forward to bestow on them absolution in the Good Master's name.

CHAPTER XV.

DAME CICELY.

THE nine days' speculation were over, and Cicely and Master Lee had pitched their tent, and openly begun their double life. For various reasons, partly to assuage the smart in Master Lee's memory, the two improvidently quitted Cambridge—where, notwithstanding Dr. Whitgift's hostility, the scholar might have expected support as divinity-reader, lecturer, tutor, writer—and travelled as far as Nottingham, to which they were previously strangers, carrying their report with them—and there, in reality, entered upon the struggle for bread. Their means were narrow, their prospects poor, their home humble. They indeed occupied a respectable house, with projecting upper story and high lattices, in the gable-lined street leading to the castle, because it was necessary, in order to meet their views, that they should present decent accommodation; but their scanty furniture of heavy oak or green beechen wood, their coarse

coverlets, their wooden bowls and platters, pewter tankards, and few specimens of earthenware, were little removed from the goods stuffed in holes and corners of the Stacies' cottage.

Here Master Lee, trading on his reputation for learning, was to receive such pupils as the middle and higher classes could afford him; while Cicely laid out the profits of his calling so as to furnish them with necessaries, and gather a store for the acquisition of substantial stuffs, dainties, and gauds, wherewith to found a family, and attain a creditable degree among the burghers of Nottingham.

Cicely performed her part; her eyes were bright, her foot was light, her hands found their work everywhere. Her duty was before her; her energies had play. The more that was asked of her, the more she was willing to do, and she went about it gladly. The young mistress of Barne-elms was not so much in her element as Dame Cicely. Cicely would have drooped in idleness. She did rebel against the helplessness and weakness, almost as much as against the indignity, of her unproclaimed vows and surreptitious keeping. Now that unpromising, discreditable manœuvre was ended, the heavier the tax demanded from her, the more eager she was to pay it. Her whole nature rose up in its goodly elasticity to fulfil the compact, and discharge the debt which she was never weary of reckoning. She would not frighten, nor distress, nor tire. She cooked, she scoured, she baked, she brewed; she

had her little maid at a crown and a smock a year, and the sole thing that fretted her was not the lass's obtuseness or carelessness, but her dearth of employment. She laughed at fatigue, she scouted unworthiness. If Kate the shrew became at last Kate the most obedient wife in Padua, Mistress Cicely, the squire's daughter, merged at once into Dame Cicely, the most notable wife in Nottingham.

Cicely was so busy and so contented with her labours that she could not help being happy, though Will Lee looked glum, and if he did not rue his outbreak, he certainly bemoaned his shipwreck. Cicely had keen feelings and spirit, but she had also the healthiest disposition in the world, and while she worked for Will, hoped for Will, prayed for Will, she could not wince at his impatience, or writhe at his moodiness. Again Master Burton's verdict must be reversed, (let it be borne in mind that the sage, excellent, mirthful-melancholic rector of Segrave was a bachelor,) but Cicely's beauty was never more conspicuous than now. Picture her neither in the peasant weeds of Mother Stacies', nor in the pretentious maiden attire of Barne-elms, but in her russet gown—no pearls now about her round throat, no silken caul on her black hair—the homely material fitted in to the long waist, and drawn into the high shoulder puffs; a large pouch in the front of the skirt laden with the gear—the sewing-balls, the knitting-clews, the folded recipes, the nutmegs and crabs of the great housewife; keys at her side, too,

(no longer the chased keys of Barne-elms,) shears and pincushion; and on her head the spotless linen coif, whose quaint, severe plainness, so trying a test to most faces, set off the noble profile whose perfection of bold line, and rounded curve, and rich olive tone, belonged rather to matron than maiden beauty.

Alake! that Master Lee should not fare so bravely. Must we own the man a craven—the scholar but a poor pedant, for ever crying after his paltry, printed pages? No, not so. Yet Lee had not so long exorcised, beat down, and driven out the pith and cream of his physical structure for nothing. A man, to be a man and not a bookworm, must not labour systematically to empty his veins of the hot bubbling blood, and replace it by cold, thin, bitter printer's ink. After a fight with himself, Lee fell back into his old habits. He was like a man roused from a trance, who displays a spasmodic animation, and presently relapses into his stupor and his visions. He followed the track of knowledge which he had barred behind him with half a will, remorsefully, despairingly, but he pursued it still, as a man walks to his fate; and he harped like a possessed man on Crichton the Scot, who was plucking by turns all the laurels of continental Europe, and to whom even Manutius, the great scholar, dedicated his works in an epistle filled with laudations. Lee had intended to provide honestly for his household; he did not purposely neglect it, and remained to a great extent igno-

rant of the cause of his failure, but the blank-mannered, abstruse, gaunt-growing student did not strike the tradesmen of Nottingham as a likely guide, expositor, encourager of their reluctant lads in the small amount of knowledge they desired for them. Young and old were disgusted and repelled by Master Lee's strange indifference, which they took for overweening pride of parts (intolerable in a poor man), and by the introverted, reserved temper which tempted him constantly to forget the primitive needs of others, and ponder on his own wants.

Pupil after pupil forsook the long, dark room, where the lengthening shadows marked the hour, and as it seemed Master Lee dozed and dreamt over his classics, his monkish chronicles, and his mathematics, oblivious of the plain English, the Lilly's Grammar, ordered for all schools by King Henry, the simple ciphers which awaited his wandering attention; or the boys said he delivered his lecture so listlessly and mechanically that they were scared by him as by a sleep-walker or ghost of a dominie, or used such illustrations that their skulls ached while they stood behind the counter, or ran errands, or even played at keel-pins, cracked nuts and roasted groats for the whole afternoon afterwards.

At last, one fine day, Master Lee awoke in wonder and dismay to find himself almost alone—an orphan sent to school by a fraudulent uncle to keep him out of the way, a blockhead content if he were let alone, and a clever lad who waded with a glim-

mering pertinacity after the wonderful master, being his sole company.

Then Cicely proposed and insisted that she should make use and transfer of her training for the common good, and the brick-floored kitchen was soon trodden by numerous little feet, and on benches beneath the garden window, where the black cherry-tree looked in with its leaves, blossoms, and fruit, during the long spring and summer, near the deep chimney within which the cat sat like a mouse in a cavern, beside the buffet which shone and flashed with its burnished flagons, cups and spoons, rows of little girls and elf boys sat with hornbooks, or needles and samplers, and learnt the rudiments of education.

There was no complaint of Cicely's performance. Briskly she set her tasks, cheerily she overlooked their completion. The gently-bred schoolmistress was not unvalued by her charge and their elders.

The pair were from circumstances solitary. Men and women marvelled that the woman had sacrificed so much—they called it sacrificed—for the sullen scholar, who was incapable of rewarding her, who was careless of her comforts, who, if he was not faithless, seemed to ignore her existence at times. But Cicely never for a moment held that opinion; in her modesty she never ceased to plume herself on his preference. It was the cross of her life to see that it was not enough for him, but she soon came to regard it as presumption to have expected to atone for his loss, to sigh for him, to pet him amain, to

exalt him, and to be contented on her own account — for did not the honour of being distinguished by him, the happiness of doing so much for him, counterbalance the toil, and the absence of what she could not but miss—success.

But what Cicely had dreaded in her abiding in the town of Cambridge met her counties away, in her open, acknowledged life in Nottingham.

Sir Hugolin Botelier, riding through Nottingham at a hand gallop, in turning up from the horse bridge over the Trent, encountered Cicely one morning returning from market, like any chapman's wife—her basket over her arm, her steeple-crowned hat, no attendant, not even a 'prentice lad bringing up the rear. In spite of his speed he recognised her, pulled up his horse upon its haunches, and hailed her loudly. 'So ho! Bonnibell, the drab of the foresworn clerk, is that all thou'st come to? Thou didst look higher yon time in the old hall of Barne-elms, of which I have not left one stone upon another.'

'Save your presence, Sir Hugolin,' replied Cicely, drawing herself up, and smiling brilliantly, ere she made her curtsey, 'the wife of an honest and learned man. I always affected learning and honesty; you know I did, sir. If you hire a guide for the sights of Nottingham, see that they do not let thee go by the false Mortimer's Hole.' And with a curse at the proud, insolent peat, the rude knight could but ride quickly on.

Again, Mistress Maud Dorset was so cross as to come out of her way to pay a troublesome visit to the Mayor of Nottingham, and bait Cicely at her own door. Mistress Dorset tripped up to her former acquaintance, spread out her satin skirts, and becked and bowed before her as if she were a countess or the Queen's Grace herself. 'How dost fare, Mistress Lee—how dost do, my lady? Allow me to make my humblest obeisance. I stand in the presence of a great woman—a miracle woman! one who turned the head and caused break his pledged word, to the undoing of a gentleman and a scholar. Let's get a look at thee, Mistress Cicely Lee; we did not mark thee half enough when we did not guess thou couldst reverse the alchemist's art, and transmute good gold into base metal. Hum—thou art not such a world's wonder, but a brown-cheeked lass in a homely kirtle. I vow Master Lee must have been the impostor, and palmed a jester's baubles for a king's crown on the worthies of the University, our good father amongst the rest. Nevertheless, I bow to thee, my naughty Mistress Lee; for do not we poor women owe thee our dear revenge?'

The water rose in Cicely's eyes; but she answered as if with the frank, quick gratitude of a person congratulated in earnest. 'I trow I am favoured, Mistress Dorset. Whereas other women buy their husbands, and doubt their lovers, my goodman lost all to gain me. The wisest, wittiest student of

your colleges was willing to risk fame and fortune, and, well-a-day, to cloud his honour' (the good Lord, indeed, forgive me my damage to so rare a gentleman), to secure this little-worth person. Not another wife in England has cause to think so highly of her goodman—not another wife was wooed so fondly—had such a true, true lover. I wis they point at me and say, 'There goes the scholar's wife, for whom he flung away his colleges, his benefices, his degrees—woe worth the waste!' I trust I be not vain, but I were not mortal if my heart did not swell with pride at words like these.'

The fierce woman who had attacked her gazed fixedly at the staunch girl, as if her ears would not credit this turn given to her jeers and abuse; and then her hard eyes blenched, a passionate colour flew over her wan, haggard face; and muttering, 'Thou art right, Mistress,' she walked fast away.

That same sundown Cicely was called by a knock to her door, and there stood Mistress Dorset's old waiting-woman under her screen, with a basket—the measure of Cicely's, on her arm. 'Here, Mistress,' she said, sharply, after the manner of her ladies, 'be minded to relieve me of this remembrance as smart as you like. It is nought more than some Cambridge cakes and a couple of bottles of Dr. Dorset's oldest vintage. My mistress greets you, and bids you accept what she carried from home for the credit of the county and her own solace. She says you belong to the flats likewise, and in a sort

to the colleges; and she is willed to acknowledge you. And see I do not care to tarry in the twilight, to be tussled by the ramshackle, noisy artisans of this weaving town.'

Cicely hesitated; nay, it was not noble nor gentle to refuse the haughty, tyrannous spinster her impetuous relenting; so she took the gift, and returned softened, kindly thanks to the proud woman, whom she pitied then almost tenderly.

After a moment's thought, Cicely brightened up immensely, donned her hat and mantle, and ran with the choice sack of goliardizing, ease-loving Dr. Dorset, but not to the grocer's, or the vintner's, or any social gossip's; on the contrary, she carried them huddled up under her cloak straight to the book-stall at the corner—where Master Lee had stood full three-quarters of an hour, within sight of his own lattices the former day, breaking off and returning again full often in the interval, as one unable to tear himself from its crabbed, potent attractions—and after a whispered conversation, she exchanged her heady fluid for a brown folio, left the queer, wizen-faced old fellow, rich with the spoils of the old monasteries, to smack his lips over his bargain—which, after all, he liked better than the gleanings he was able to pick from the printed treasures in his possession, while the young woman hied home to spoil her darling with this fuel to the fire which consumed him.

'Eh, what! Cicely. How couldst thou know? How

didst thou come by it?' he asked, eagerly, as he fingered the smoked boards with trembling fondness, after she had laid it before him with an affectionate stratagem and an arch formality. 'The very 'Huntingdon' which I saw to day, and which your father promised me the last time I talked with him.'

'Maybe my good father sent it to me by a friendly spirit from beyond seas,' she answered, with a half sigh at the core of her rejoicing; 'my kind, excellent father—my dear old father—learned Master Yorke. Ah! he was worthy of thee, Will; he would have been company for thee; and he would have done much more for us than this. No, it did not come from my father, though it came nigh as strangely and freely.'

When she recounted the favour which vouchsafed it, Lee stumbled at the means. 'I ought not to have it, Cicely; I say not that thou wert to blame in submitting to those raging curmudgeons when they chose to play the friend—when they had the grace to desire to be affable and obliging, but thou mightst have got rid of their benefit in some other way. Was there none to whom thou owedst a condescension—no gay riband, nor feather, nor silken cushion, nor painted dish, which thou couldst fancy for thine own delectation? What, none! Thou art too good for me, sweet. No wonder that I coveted thee, a broken man, a chill, heavy-headed fellow at the best.'

Bless the man! there was more wanted in that house than feathers and painted dishes; but she assured him, with warm kisses and earnest protestations, that she desired nothing; that her satisfaction was in his gain, as was true, doubtless; and the simple scholar pacified his conscience with the plea, 'It is not for my pleasure alone. Who can tell what may yet be in store for us; or if my parts and knowledge—alake, alake! the last is not what it might have been—shall not yet win honour?' You know his dazzled eyes were nearly blinded by the rapidly risen meridian splendour of that son of fortune and merit, the Admirable Crichton, whose sounding renown reached even Lee in his trading retreat.

Still humble folks were tempted to hug themselves on their insignificance just then, when Cicely sat in the low but steady light of her obscure hearth, and Master Lee murmured, as he turned over the stone lilies he had picked up in his walk—he wished, indeed, they were pennies belonging to St. Boniface, or anybody else, who would bestow them upon him—to him they were more like giant's tears, as they dub them in Germany, or sighed over the doggrels which seemed to unite the old mythology with the new alchemy, and which a married man, if any, should solve.

Take Mercury from Mercury, which is his wife,
For Mercury's wife to Mercury maketh great strife.
But Mercury's wife's wife
To Mercury maketh no strife.

Or the fable of Daphne—

Though Daphne fly from Phœbus' light,
  Yet shall they both be one;
And if you understand this right,
  You have our famous stone.

For Daphne she is fair and white,
  But volatile is she;
Phœbus, a fixed god of might,
  And red of blood is he.

* * * * *

So long as they can flow as wax,
  And no fume you can see,
Then have you all you need to ask,
  Pray God, and thankful be.*

'And sure, Cicely,' Will Lee would argue, 'Ambrose Barton sware that he had seen the transmutation of pewter flagons and dishes into silver by dint of a powder.'

And Cicely would rebuke him gently, 'I mind the time when thou didst set slight store on miser's dreams. Nay, we are not reduced to them; we are not worse off than our neighbours. Think of the alarms, the headings and hangings, the noble Duke gone to the scaffold, and you poor Princess, whom no man likes to name, immured in our England, and only carried from castle to castle, and from warden to warden, as a man changes his gaol and gaoler. What an she were light and heedless in her prosperity, I ween she is dull enough now. Ah, me! who would

* Cook Taylor's *Romantic Biographies* in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

be born to so fair a face, and to so old a crown, so the end be the strife of tongues, prison fare, and a grave. Rest thee, Will; we are better fitted, in our low estate, than those high folks on the brink of a precipice. Pray God teach us the amount of our incontinence, that we may seek forgiveness, and dwell in peace and quietness for evermore.'

For that was a grim, as well as gallant time, when, in the dark shadow of the Tower, there lay, side by side, two Dukes between two Queens, on the necks of one and all of whom had descended the fatal axe, whose accolades need no repetition, and whose blows were so common of late, that men turned their heads with an uneasy crick, in anticipation of their turn in the game.

There was the rebellion of the great Northern Lords, and their severe punishment. There was the attainder, followed by the execution, of the princely Norfolk, extinguishing the Lees' faint hope of the restoration of their kindred—the block had saved him that last bridal pillow. Master Fox's pupil had died for the Catholic cause, though no renegade, no abject slave, shrieking 'Oh, that it would please her good Grace to give me life—yea, the life of a dog;' but a gallant, hesitating, obtuse enough English gentleman, arrested at St. Alban's, detained at Barnholm, sent by water to the Tower, when the Northern Confederates struck their random blow; and 'Away!' cries Elizabeth, 'what the laws fail to do, my authority shall effect,' and falls into a fit—a lion-heart though

she owned. Afterwards the Duke was allowed a little liberty, permitted to go to his own house, but deprived of Parliamentary privileges, and with his honour compromised. Then broke out the proposed escape of Mary by armed force; the finding of Mary's letter to the Bishop of Ross in no more elaborate and ingenious hiding-hole than under the mats in an entry leading to the Duke's bedchamber, and the money on his servants to be conveyed to Lord Herries—by him to Ledington and Grange.

So the watch was increased in the city and principal towns, and on the roads musters of the trainbands, in their armour of the Middle Ages, heavy morion, tough, embossed shield, glittering breastplate.

The great nobleman's trial came on, the Solicitor-General Bromley presiding, Leicester sitting as a judge of the crime of which he was said to have been instigator, all England listening. A heraldic offence was first entered against Norfolk, as against his father—the audience well avised how Surrey had aspired to the English, and Norfolk to the Scottish Mary—an unlucky unity of name and idea.

The sentence was pronounced, and Norfolk answered like a man—'The Lord's will be done; God judge between me and my accusers.' All England bemoaned his fate. Four times Elizabeth signed the death-warrant; four times drew back—an incident which people have forgotten, when they have refused to credit her reluctance to confirm the destruction of her cousin and sister Queen. They might have be-

lieved the testimony of a courtier when he had nothing to get, and rather something to imperil by it. They might have read what Robert Cary wrote privately to his wife, 'Sweet Mall,' and left on black and white, inadvertently as it were, while he was describing his last interview with his Queen and kinswoman.

'She took me by the hand, and wrung it hard, and said, 'No, Robin, I am not well.' * * * In her discourse she fetched not so few as forty or fifty great sighs. I was grieved at the first to see her in this plight, for in all my lifetime I never knew her fetch a sigh but when the Queen of Scots was beheaded. *Then, upon my knowledge,* she shed many tears and sighs, manifesting her innocence that she never' (of her own free will that should be) 'gave consent to the death of that Queen.'*

Let who will fail to recognise that the bold Apostle Peter was the same who denied his Master; and of mere men that the stern usurper Cromwell wept at times woman's tears—still the facts remain the same.

A sudden clamour was raised against the Duke. Ministers preached against him as a restorer of idolatry; the Houses of Parliament petitioned for this execution, as they did for that other still more tragic end. So on the second of June—high summer—in the freshness of eight of the morning—the crowd was assembled. The peer stood forward, humbly confessed his communications with Mary—passed

* *Court of Queen Elizabeth.*

against his word to the contrary—solemnly denied any other offence against the realm. Staunch, generous Lee of Ditchley, Elizabeth's champion, received his last embrace, and repeated to the assembled multitude his request, that they would assist him with their prayers in his final agony; and the headsman's stroke descended, and the bier covered with black velvet bore the bleeding trunk back to the Tower. Without ceremony, the Earl of Northumberland was executed at York; and Elizabeth's faithful old servant, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, died under his disgrace.

Men might well hold their breath and grow pale; but as another consequence, there was the wrathful rustle of the Roman Catholics, which ended in the Pope's bull of excommunictaion being nailed to the very palace of Westminster; in Edmund Campion, dearly loved by the English Catholics, being betrayed in the house of Edward Yates, of Lufford, near Wantage, led to the Tower, with the paper pinned upon his hat, bearing his accusation—'Edmund Campion, the most pernicious Jesuit,' so racked, that on trial his wounded arms and hands were wrapped in fur cuffs, kissed and held up by one of his companions, in order that he might plead 'not guilty;' drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn, asked for what Queen he prayed, answered bravely, 'Yes, for Elizabeth, my Queen, and your Queen.' Close after him followed Sherwin, a Catholic also, a scholar of Exeter College, who, insulted by his executioner, turned

and kissed the gory hands meekly, and so affected the spectators by his submission, that they cried in tears—'Good Sherwin! the Lord receive thy good soul!' And in that mob there stood three earls, six barons, many knights, and scores of persons of substance and respectability.

And Cicely might have her say out, for though she knew nothing of it, at that very time Sir Thomas Sadler and Bess of Hardwick, as rough as any Mother Stacie, and scarce so upright, were informing their unhappy captive, with taunting cruelty, that the brother of whom Lady Scrope had talked at Bolton wiling away the weary hours — he whom Mary had addressed as 'her Norfolk,' styling him her only hope and stay—had paid the forfeit of Mary Stuart's lovers, great and small.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE INVENTION.

A FEW more seasons, and Whitgift at Elizabeth's right hand urged the fulfilment of the Act of Uniformity. Hundreds of good men were ejected from their pulpits, and their parishes left destitute, while they 'travelled up and down the country preaching where they could get leave,' holding forth in streets, fields, and woods, and 'in the privacy of the houses, and other buildings of their disciples.' The preachers and the hearers were alike liable to fine and imprisonment, and if they appealed to the press to redress their wrongs, 'the printer and publisher forfeited all the copies of the 'defences' and 'apologies,' were imprisoned three months, and could never print afterwards. The very sellers, binders, and stitchers were fined twenty shillings for every book, and no place or person safe from search.'

Thus William Lee and Cicely were exposed to a stronger blast of adversity, and as, notwith-

standing their previous deceit, they did not think of dissembling and compromising their faith, perhaps it is safe to say that had their backs not been already at the wall, this hurricane alone was sufficient to prostrate them.

Master Lee and Cicely kept house and company at their pinched fireside one bleak night in March—that early spring promising and enlivening to the rich, but hardest of all on the wasted sinews of the poor. Years had brought no change but for the worse to their beggared fortunes, save that there lay in the cradle a dark-haired nursling, and an urchin sturdy and mischievous stood at Cicely's knee. Wasting illness was on the poor student, whose heart was slowly breaking in the perpetual battle with his early bent and breeding, and the long sickness of hope deferred. The dame-school was dispersed with Master Lee's batch of scholars, the little maid had found another place, and it is a well-accredited fact that Cicely maintained her entire household—her husband, herself, and her children, by the exercise of that knitting, spreading amain, which she had learned to practise as a curious art in her free maiden days at Barne-elms.

Somewhat sharp and meagre were the old rounded lines of the well-knit figure, the comely face was worn and hollow in its prime, but the 'symmetry of mould' remained, and still the boddice was busked trimly, the linen apron and coif were fresh and spotless, the brown eyes bright as stars, the full

mouth soft and peaceful, and Cicely cockered her ailing goodman, and rocked her children to the tune of 'Green Sleeves,' and that 'Whistle' of those melodious 'Carmen' who, like the lilting, tripping milkmaids, seem to have belonged by right to this musical age. Up early and down late, toiled, and moiled, and scrimped, Cicely kept her promise, and came out of tribulation glorified, not marred.

Opposite her, wistfully watching her long fingers growing lean in their constant aching employ, a haggard, unshaven man sat drooping into decay. Zealously Cicely guarded, and tenderly soothed him. 'Cheerily, Will,' she would say, 'thou'lt soon be well; thou must try the rasher for supper, or shall it be the mackerel? I have a full cupboard to-night, and no wonder, for thou didst eat nothing at dinner. Doth thy head ache, my poor man? Now, wilt thou take the bolus from the barber, since he would not bleed thee again?' and Cicely declared that it was taking breath and resting herself to bathe the hot, troubled brow. Suddenly Master Lee caught the hand that was tending him, and kissed it, but Cicely knew right well what was not good for him in his weak state, and pulled it away, and slapped him across the mouth, protesting merrily that he was making game of his old wife, yet she could not resist adding sorrowfully: 'Hast forgotten, William, lad, it held a thorn the first time it was pressed in thine?'

'And it plucked out the prickle long agone, and I have given it back with interest—an unmanly re-

prisal—shall I ever be able to undo it?' sighed Lee, and Cicely frowned at herself for being so stupid and careless as to awaken the distempered fancies ever lodging in that brain.

'Poor Diccon is nodding on his stool, but I must turn my heel ere I tuck him in.'

'Lay him on my knees, Cicely,' importuned Lee; 'I am fit to bear his weight.'

Cicely would have demurred, but she was conscious that if she denied the request, the inward pain would far exceed the bodily weariness. 'He is a great boy for his years,' Cicely said, turning away her head, that she might not be struck by the contrast between the chubby, well-favoured child, thriving on his bit of oaten bread and his milk-and-water, or on his handful of filberts sometimes, when the bin was very bare, as on beef and dumpling, and his sick father. 'Diccon tries the criss-cross rows already, and laughs where other boys cry over their letters; he'll be a scholar anon.'

'Nay!' put in Lee, hastily, 'rear him to what thou wilt, Cicely. Make him a modest workman, or a brattling man-at-arms, but no scholar; thou hast seen enough of it in his father.'

'Fie, Will!' protested Cicely, warmly; 'dost forget whom we are come of? A workman or a man-at-arms, indeed! I wont keep these shifts for little Will. Besides what thou wilt come to thyself one day, when thou art strong again and fit to astonish the world with a paper on the strange star we saw

last year which affrighted the people—thou laughing at their folly, and telling them there had been such since the world began; or thy version of those grand songs, orations, and histories thou hast put into English of a winter night for my benefit. I vow they are worth a score of mummings and high dances. Thou art the Lord's servant, Will; He uses all kinds—He will call thee presently.'

Lee shook his head in settled despondency, and made no other rejoinder.

Cicely chatted on, heartening him in her way. 'I have a heap of work upon my hands, and well paid; I vow I'll grow rich on my hose. Thou'lt be getting thy hands on an old pot full of angels one of these days, or rather tradesmen's tokens, for I'm mostly paid with the coin in hand. They say the Queen's Grace and her Government are opposed to these issues; but they be mighty convenient for poor bodies who cannot change silver. To think that the Mistress Dorsets should have come by such a lot, only payable in Nottingham; and glad they were to send them to me as over and above payment of the six pair stocks—half Flanders thread half lamb's-wool—ordered at a bout, and so get them off their hands. Well, Will, it was kind of the Mistress Dorsets to arrange to be supplied with their knitting so far from home. I take shame to myself that I ever dubbed them furies and scolds, when they have proved my very good friends. Ah, Will! they whispered such a terrible story of Mistress Maud's

youth, that might well make her mad to wot of, whether it were false or true. God forgive her! for my mind misgives me that it was true, though I believed it not when I was a light lass, and railed at her. And is it not passing strange that now, when I seem sadly to credit the sin, I have learnt to love the sinner? I mind they had always a character of lending a helping hand to the needy who marched with their notions, while they lorded it among their equals. They may not be pardoned or beloved in this world—neither can we recompense them, Will; but better than fashion or favour is the promise provided for him who doth consider the case of the poor man—who telleth it over in his closet, and layeth it to heart until it be relieved.'

'There is a legend, my lady,' observed Lee, smiling faintly, 'of a certain heavenly musician who played such ravishing airs that the very stones were moved by his melody.'

'I have heard the tale,' broke in Cicely, colouring up a pretty scarlet like any maiden in her courting days; 'but I see not what it has to do with me and the Mistress Dorsets, or else it is gross flattery on the one hand, and rank abuse on the other. List to that honest judgment, Master Lee, for thou art as vile a courtier as any; and while I am bedding sleepy Diccon, wilt count over that trash which foolish folk hold so dear;' and she emptied into his two hands for his distraction a pouch full of bits of lead, tin, and even leather, bearing different stamps, and standing for

the copper pence, halfpence, and farthings of future mints. Lee languidly reckoned them, examined their characters, and classed them according to their different founders—with whom alone they passed current, thus at once restricting and favouring trade.

The tokens were from a variety of traders, by a happy chance suited to the wants of Mistress Lee. There appeared the symbol of the loaf, and the prosaic 'I will exchange a penny' of Geoffrey the baker; the gaping pike, and the pleasant distich,

Welcome you be
To trade with me,

of the great fishmonger, who protested so loudly against the use of flesh in Lent, though people should give up mass and deny purgatory; the mocking, aggravating invitation, 'Come to poor Paul of Civet-lane,' who was the mealman, and one of the richest burghers in Nottingham; the initials and the smart, self-conceited

Pains make gains,

of the creditable linendraper; down to the simple 'Send me to Jack Tyler, the woodmonger,' and the device of 'Two men booin and scraping,' indicating the red-latticed vintners.

As Lee fingered them, and mechanically read their homely letters and figures, he started to meet the motto of his own house, the 'More faithful than favoured,' assumed by some grateful and honoured

trader in compliment to Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, the Queen's champion.

Lee was well acquainted with the life of Sir Harry, who yearly appeared in the tilt-yard on the 27th of November, and flinging down his gauntlet, challenged every disputant of Elizabeth's title and asperser of her sovereign merits, until old age compelled him to resign the office, and on a great day he publicly gave it up to my Lord Cumberland, donned the black velvet side-coat and buttoned cap of peace, and through the mouth of Mr. Hales, 'her Majesty's servant, a singer,' announced,

> My helmet now shall make an hive for bees;

and preferred the worthy petition—

> Goddess, vouchsafe this aged man his right
> To be your beadsman now, that was your knight.

On one occasion, it happened that Sir Harry had his life saved by the watchfulness of a poor, fond cur, whom he had been wont to treat neglectfully and scornfully, and in gratitude and in shame for his former contumely, the true old knight, who had borne the constellation of Ariadne on his shield, thenceforth adopted for himself and his heirs for ever the self-reproachful scroll,

> More faithful than favoured.

Wherein had the proverb been fulfilled in Lee's misgiven life? Not in the case of his best friend and dear housewife, Cicely. In all his restless, un-

easy pangs of dissatisfaction and repentance, he could never accuse himself of a failure in love to his Cicely. She had been the jewel for which he had staked all, and would stake it again, though in his losses he had done his utmost to dim, flaw, and hide the magnet.

Cicely had ceased her brisk steps to and fro, undressing, plunging into cold water, reverently leading the lisping prayers, laying down and covering right and tight, and kissing with an inspiriting, protecting kiss, her boy. She sat again before him, knitting for dear life, and more than life, into the night, so active that she had ceased to talk, or to crumple her wide, smooth brow with the thick-coming memories, visions, hopes, ay and fears, which kept that hard life from irking her sorely, which preserved in the unsoured, undrained, unhardened, toiling Dame Cicely the delightsome intelligence and intuition rather than experience, of young Cicely Yorke.

Strange that those slight fingers should be the stay of a family; that where the man of wit and of college learning had been knocked down, the single-hearted woman held on. The click of those blunt, dull wires had achieved that wherein his wisdom, strength, and pride of manhood had failed. It was the triumph of the manual labour he had despised; and what dreary labour it was! But Cicely, his Patient Grizel, could be content to unwind that clue for the hundredth and thousandth time, and accumulate those numberless meshes till her work was

done—until he grew giddy, and lost count and measurement, and all for the foot and leg of one out of a pair of hose.

Was it impossible to lessen this tediousness, and save these wasting twitches of wool, or thread, and limbs? He thought of the looms of the weavers which the Flemings had rendered illustrious, for they had preserved the designs of the Italian painter, Raphael—woven them into silken stuff, warranted to last for centuries, and procured for them, by transfer, thousands of crowns. Could not his brain hammer out a resource to marry these machines to the hosen? His body was dwindling fast away into a most miserable carcass; but he had a vivid impression that his mind was still as quick, suggestive, and concentrative as ever. Why not employ its last efforts on this experiment? He had once ordained it a different mission, and walked haughtily among the practical, sensual matter of life. Ah! but he recognised the full value of the hand now, and the literal meaning of the Apostle when he said one member should not boast itself over another. His stout spirit was subdued; he was fain to serve as a dull playfellow, or a tumbled pillow, to Diccon or little Will, to cheat himself into the belief that he was relieving his good wife. He would be right glad to lighten her work, to smoothen the way for her, to hit upon some swift, sufficient method to a like end, though that should be the attainment of his life, and he should then die and be forgotten. How

much of Lord and Master, and brethren he had missed for the small fruit of scholarship which had beguiled him, and the narrow limits of the University which he had forsaken, and which had deserted him in turn—utterly. He was the Lord's servant, as she had said; but oh, sirs! what an opinionated, stubborn servant, and all had given him up but Cicely, who would join him in the skies when it should be time for laying down her cross, after he had been permitted to relinquish his, when he should be a disembodied spirit, and might be permitted to help her effectually.

'Of a surety, Will Lee, thou art better to-night,' observed Cicely, suddenly looking over to him with glad surprise. 'There is colour in thy cheek, and thou art sitting up straight and firm as e'er thou didst.'

'I fear me I had always a bookman's slouch, Cicely; but, after all, that is not the bulched back of Sathan.'

'Not at all, Will. And I was clearly of opinion that there was nought ailed thee but the spring sickness.'

'Spring sickness, or falling sickness, I know not. I do not pretend to be skilled in disorders, but this I do know, that it would long ere this have been the gaol sickness, but for thee, dear heart, who would not send me to the spital. But I do believe the ailment is gone for the present; that I shall walk across the floor to-morrow, and walk abroad the day after.'

'That is right, Will!' exclaimed Cicely, affectionately and excitedly, clicking her needles faster and faster, and nodding her sensible, kind, beautiful, motherly head; 'keep up a heart of grace—it will heal thee sooner than any chirurgeon.'

Master Lee kept his word. He got on foot again with almost miraculous celerity; he breathed the fresh air to his profit; and in place of wandering away, as his unhealthy custom had been, to the byways and grass-grown paths about the town, the least frequented roads by the Trent, he sought the thoroughfares, looked curiously about him, attended to the 'What lack ye?' of the apprentices, stared into the booths, and even addressed some of the artisans, entered their sheds, and watched them at work.

Cicely noted this change, as she was quick to observe every trifle connected with William Lee; and although she did not divine the purport, she was thankful to hail the new movement, because, at times, the faithful young wife had been beset with the dread—not so much that Lee would go melancholy mad or die in his prime, as that in the isolation in which he stood, and the ill-will he had contrived to draw down upon himself from the ignorant vulgar on every side—some fine morning a malicious or morbid tongue would arraign him as a sorcerer, and given to fill innocent folk with little devils—the silent, foiled man, who, with all his accomplishments, could not fill his children's mouths with bread. Then Darrel the witch-finder would appear, and their

blameless life, her industry, their poverty, and trials, and devoted love would avail them nothing.

Cicely was pleased that Lee should make the humblest friends, well content for his health's sake that he should break off from the spell of his books and papers, and amuse himself with the simple life and its machinery around him; though she wondered much and trembled a little that he should go the length of drawing patterns, borrowing and then buying tools, and, as timber was plentiful, constructing toy beams and shuttles, to the great edification of Diccon, who could no longer be said to laugh over his letters where other children cried, but who gave himself up to trotting at his quiet father's heels, amassing shavings and contracting sore bruises from hammers, sharp cuts from files, and blue nips from pincers.

'The boy takes more to thee, Will, than to me. Dost spend thyself on a plan of training him?' asked Cicely, inquisitively.

'Nay, I am working for my own hand,' answered Lee, evasively; 'but, thank God, my fellow is more plastic than I was—not yet larded over with the pride of schools.'

'I think here be more question of plasters than plasticness,' exclaimed Cicely, bluntly, as Diccon ran ruefully to her lap, trying not to cry, with his hundredth hurt.

But Lee looked haler and heartier than he had done for many a day.

'Mother,' whispered Diccon, 'I'll tell thee a secret. Dost love a secret, mother? Oh, I do so dote on a great big one. Wilt tell me such, one day?'

'Belike, if thou growest up trustworthy, and canst refrain from blabbing, my little son.'

'When wilt thou give over calling me thy little son, mother? I don't like it,' fretted the forward boy.

'Why, when thou art my big son, thou goose boy, and mayst have thy likes and dislikes with more propriety.'

'I wish that time were come, mother.'

'It wont any more for thy wishing, Diccon; and thy mother will be grey-headed and wrinkled when thou seest that day.'

'But I will work for thee, mother.'

'That thou wilt, my brave Diccon, until thou findest a wife.'

'I don't want a wife—I will have nothing to do with a wife.'

'Not now, my Knight Templar, my crabbed bachelor; but thou wilt one day, as much as thy father wanted me.'

'Did Robin Hood want one, mother, when he had his hall in the cave here, and his stable in the face of the cliff, at Lene Hollow, near Newstead. I know

Robyn loved one dere lady,
For doute of dedely synne;
Wolde he never do company harme
That any woman was ynne.

I can say more about Robin if you will hear me. And did my father want thee much, mother?'

'Yea, he wanted me much, Diccon,' repeated Cicely, proudly, and again the pretty youthful scarlet flew into the brown cheek.

The observant boy flung his arms round her neck, and said, 'I'll tell thee why, mother.' Because thou art so bonny.'

'Ah! thou small fool, was that thy secret?'

'No, no.'

'And did it concern no other person who would not wish it tampered with?' Cicely warned him, conscientiously.

'It is my father's, but my father's business is thy business,' suggested the boy, inquiringly.

'Surely,' answered Cicely, confidently. 'What is the great ado?'

'My father says he is going to make his next little loom all by himself, and to surprise thee and me with its powers when it is completed. Is that because women and children should not see things half done?'

'Thou art an impudent child! Go to, thou art a spoiled brat,' exclaimed his mother, suddenly rising and chasing him to the door; 'thy father knoweth I have not time to pay heed to such plays.'

In spite of the amendment, there was a little pique in the readiness with which Cicely fell in with Master Lee's desire for privacy in his new employment. Oh! no, she would not disturb him; he

should have the upper room all to himself for his mechanics; it should be kept inviolate, unless, indeed, he forgot his meals. And Cicely scoured past the closed door in those spring days when Plough Monday, with Bessy and the clown, and the stalwart young men in white shirts, without coat or waistcoat, covered with ribands folded into roses, drawing the plough; and Shrove Tuesday, with the threshing of the cocks, so punished because they had warned the Danes of a Saxon insurrection; and Palm Sunday, which had still its ass and wooden image led abroad by the most devout, followed in rapid succession. Cicely never deigned so much as to look towards the oaken barrier, left the sanctum unaired and undusted, and when Lee did neglect to break his fasts, honourably went beyond the letter of her engagement by despatching Diccon to apprise him of his obliviousness by word from without, and boxed the ears of the said Diccon for demeaning himself to peep through the keyhole of the forbidden chamber.

Lee was quite unsuspicious of creating any unusual sensation by his sudden notion, and the pertinacity and secrecy with which he carried it out. Notwithstanding, his goings on began to be past forbearing toleration—absenting himself from the family circle for days together, making all sorts of chopping, creaking, and grating noises in the higher regions, coming down on those biting nights of east wind, blue with cold, pale with exhaustion, or moist with sweat, sitting dreaming, dreaming in the

chimney-corner as of old—swiftly starting up as if he had found a treasure, or caught a thief, or met a long-sought friend, and away again to his machinations and manufactures, and no palpable result, nor word, nor sign to his wife of his intentions or achievements.

'He must be building a furnace, though he has no stone or fire that I know of, or fixing a crucible to brew abominations. He'll blow the roof off our heads, he's so forgetful; he'll scorch himself to a cinder, he's so unnoticing; he'll stifle himself with his own fumes, he's so careless;' and losing sight of all else in his personal danger, Cicely ran up to the den she had dedicated to him and avoided till he should beg and pray her to set her foot among his gear, and tried the heavy latch. It resisted her efforts; the door was bolted from within; and the solitary inmate did not even condescend to acknowledge her agitated summons. Really he might mount a broom-stick and fly up the chimney, and Cicely would have nothing more to say against it.

Cicely withdrew from the barrier in great pain and indignation. So much as she had done for him, and, like Jacob, counted it as nothing for the great love she bore him—so proud as she had been of his regard, and thus to be coolly set aside and set at nought, was more than any temper, particularly a Yorke's temper, could endure.

It is trying to behold 'how great a matter a little fire kindleth,' and sometimes the author of the fire

quite unaware of his mischief. It might have given the reader a great faith in the events related in the narrative of Bluebeard's wife, could he have seen the change wrought in the Lees' dwelling three hundred years ago by one closed door. The heading and hanging around them—the poverty, anomalous position, and loss of grade—the persecution was nothing to it. Master Lee must certainly have perceived it, had he not been so unaccountably engrossed that though the hot summer was come, and the long light nights when the lads played at bucklers in the streets, and now and then some bold lasses yet danced for garlands, and the mellow autumn was at hand, he found no time for sworn companionship — nothing but the briefest, coldest words at meals—no chats by the twilight lattice, or over Will's cradle—no morning hails of fresh hope and resolution—no rare saunters to the market, or down by the brimming Trent, and out into the green fields—no repair to the garden—not a song in the honeysuckle arbour, gleaned from Dick the courtier, set to the accompaniment of Nan's cithern, and once ringing to the echoes of the great old hunting hall of Barne-elms. The cherries dropped black from the upper boughs beneath the eaves, or made a feast to the blackbirds, because they were only brought down by a woman's arm or Diccon's feats of climbing. Not even the sober, secret communings of the Sundays—even then Will Lee was more desperately distraught than when he was a

single man and a sworn student, and Cicely looked at last careworn and querulous, and neighbours began to whisper and to gaze across at the clouded, cob-webbed window where a man's thin face was ever and anon appearing, where he would breathe on the thick glass, and—mysterious and alarming deed—draw with his bony finger other lines than Archimedes traced in his bath, or than mere mathematics and mathematicians wotted of.

Still Master Lee throve on his strange practices. He might look worried, excited, anxious in a way that no man could explain, but he had all the superior vitality and force of the man who cherishes a design, to him who has neither aim nor end, part nor lot in this world. However obtained, and however spent, Lee had got new life; and in his threadbare surcoat, with his abrupt, unexplained impulses and actions, looked another man.

Generous Cicely could not rejoice in this second birth. Cicely burned with bitter jealousy, or sickened with fresh apprehension—all the worse for its vagueness—for, oddest of odd enigmas, she began to miss portions of her flax and wool; nay, she could even have taken an oath that Lee had purloined some of her diligently knitted hose, on which their daily bread depended; in the gray morning she saw either the scholar or his familiar speed up the stairs with the trophies on his arm. No wonder Cicely shivered and shrank at the terrible absurdity and ghastly grotesqueness of the vision.

It was a harvest night, lit by an early-rising full yellow moon. Cicely remembered it well, for she had idled, unlike herself, at the door that day, and witnessed the townsfolk taking in their stores—their corn from the burgh crofts, their late hay, their white and their black peas from their gardens, their measures of apples, ruddy and golden, from their orchards, their wisps of white flax and green hemp from their greens, their billets of brown wood from Thorney Wood and High Forest, into which the great Forest of Sherwood, once overlapping Notts from right to left, was divided. Nineteen towns and villages were within the bounds of Thorney Wood. Great russet oaks, with 'entangled branches so twisted together that they hardly left room for persons to pass,' grew at Birkland and Bilhagh; and far into the lone, sylvan recesses which Cicely had never penetrated on her greatest holidays, was Wolfhuntland, held by the service of winding a horn to frighten away the wolves; and where still, on rare occasions, wolves with high back, long drooping tail, low deep growl, stealthy, glowing eye and glistening fangs were shot with the crossbow, or speared with the lance.

Cicely marked the pleasant bustle in the town, and listened to the gibes, and good wishes, and the jollity of master and mistress, maid and man, mutually excited by their interest and share in the common goodly fruits of the earth, thus sown and grown, ripened and garnered.

At the Frippery over the way an impetus was given to the sale of gay shoe-knots, hatbands, scarfs, and ties—the tailor was even enthusiastically flashing new shears, needles, and goose, on a sudden tide of doublets, pourpoints, and riding-skirts.

By comes Willoughby of Woolaton's man, with a fat buck slung before him on his smoking beast. Ah! if even 'the keeper's fee,' the horns, hoofs, and skin, had but reached the 'captain tall' and his merry men, enticed by the mad dancers, the Northern lights, to perish at the mouth of the Arzina in Russian Lapland, starved to skeletons, and

> Froze into statues; to the cordage glued
> The sailor—and the pilot to the helm.

Now it was a detachment of soldiers marching up to the Castle—yet spared from the great burning which illuminated every window in Nottingham—pike-men with bright corslets, billmen in aprons of mail, demi-lances, and gunners with harquebusses and wheel-locks, roaring, in good time and tune, a snatch of a camp song.

Then it was some wild town lads, racing down to the river to have a match and a souse, with round wherries and staves flat at the ends, at water quintain.

Anon it was a party of fantastic players and their wives, in yellow stockings and black hose, and versi-colour jackets, and hoods without mufflers, who had been travelling the country during the summer, and were now wending their way home to their master's

house at Houghton, laughing, and skirling, and pantomiming, as such light, improvident fools do ever—but more especially when they are close upon their bourne; and certes it was an excellent anchorage, and they were fain to contribute to its attractions—where Christmas was held from All-Hallow-tide to Candlemas—during which 'any man was permitted to stay three days, without being asked whence he came or what he was,' by brave Sir William Holles, who never rode to the Sessions without a company of thirty fellows rattling behind him.

The sad woman contemplated mirth and gladness, anticipating the hard winter, and turned bitterly into her empty, echoing house, to hush her baby, and bid her eldest-born be still, when he wondered and complained because they had no in-gathering, no treat, no outburst of family joy and thankfulness.

It was just after the children were a-bed, ere Cicely had lit her lamp, that Lee, whom she had not seen since the grey morning, descended the stair with a quick, unequal step, and saying, with a long gasp for breath, 'Come, Cicely, come, wife,' motioned to her to accompany him to his workshop. Cicely, too, drew a sigh, and her brow darkened, and she pressed her hand to her side, as she followed him quickly a little way. He had left the door ajar, and as he pushed it back, Cicely closed her eyes with a spasm, and opened them to gaze fearfully around her.

There was nothing appalling; there was little

unusual, save thick dust, and the half-sawn planks, and fragments of wood and shavings—the scattered tools, the nails and glue, the *debris* of a carpenter or joiner.

On the floor were half-obliterated chalk drawings, and there was a general litter of paper shapes and cuttings. At the end of the room stood several skeletons and wrecks of machines, at different stages, and one whole and complete. A small, rude loom, such as Cicely fancied she had often seen; across it lay long threads of her own good flax, and on the beam hung really and truly a pair of thread hose; but slit up the back, so as to present the appearance of a pair of legs anatomically cut open, or a calf's head cloven by the butcher, and ready for dressing—in halves.

To these dissected hose Lee pointed, dumb, palpitating, heroic, with the gesture of a player or a madman. Cicely advanced closer. Yes—no, they were not her painful work—these were her hosen coiled together, soiled, drawn and torn, cast into a rubbish heap of ends of flax and ravelled thread, and dried scrapings of batter. The hose before her were smooth and regular, as she had not believed women's fingers could produce them, and the divided edge was even, and run together, so as to prevent them evanishing into the original material, as Cinderella's grand garments dwindled into cast rags.

'Cicely,' Lee found hoarse, strained voice to say, 'this is my summer's work! There are my hosen.

Mayhap men will call them 'Will Lee's hosen,' who have never heard a word of my theses and apothegms, my defences and apologies, my commentaries and antiquities. You stare; but I have not invaded thy craft, Dame Cicely. I have not become a manikin, or even a tailor, like crooked Tony yonder, and used my lady's needle for a sword, or her pillow for harness. I have only transposed her work, so that when my device is improved and perfected, men will create, by scores and hundreds, what women have performed in single stocks, loop by loop, with infinite trouble, and gross expenditure of precious time.' And he led forward his still silent and confounded wife, and pointed eagerly to the ingenious and most excellent contrivance, by which, after lavishing on the idea energy and enterprise, painstaking and patience, enough to have discovered new *Pandects*, and revised them, from beginning to end, with a flood of Saxon light, he had arranged, altered, tried, corrected, and concluded that the looms which wove the warp and woof of cloth should also construct the elastic chain armour of round loops, linked one within another, in ever-extending and unbroken union, which folk had been accustomed to call knitting, and view as solely the result of a woman's ten neat fingers and two nice eyes, acting upon the satellites of ball and wires, for two revolutions of the earth round its own axis, two alternations of day and night, excepting due seasons of repose, at the soonest and by the cleverest—when

finished, forming the comfortable, easy, exquisite substitute for hanging, wrinkling leather, linen, or silk, which all respectable legs, grown fine and luxurious, could no longer resist.

At last Lee paused, and looked up for Cicely's commendation and delight. The brows that were wont to be so straight to him contracted more and more, the pleasant mouth drew in. 'A hundred pairs, Will Lee? Why, that would demand a hundred legs, when only two are forthcoming, and all they as flat as money-pieces—ha! ha! A gross expenditure of time say you? I did not know that thou wast such a punctilious dial-reckoner of minutes and hours—I thought students lost count of days and weeks. And hast thou employed thy precious time well of late,' she continued passionately, with the flush on her cheek waxing deeper and deeper, 'thus to find out a substitute for feeble age and silly womankind? If men are so mighty clever, they ought to turn their abilities to a different account, and master men's business, leaving us our mean trade. Let who will make money by this base invention, it shall never be me. I could not eat up the widow's and the lone woman's bread,' and growing white again with sheer scorn and rage, Cicely turned on her heel and left the upper room.

Lee was totally unprepared for a defence. He stood more taken aback by the consequence of his communication than when Dr. Whitgift convicted him of his secret, and detected his hidden wife. At

last he turned his dazzled eyes from the door, and his hand fell on his loom. 'So this is my reward,' he confided to the gathering shades; 'methought I had renounced my own will in the deed, and my own wife, in whose service it was undertaken, denounces my selfishness, and all but accuses me of villany—my own wife who has borne with me long, and acted nobly for both—I cannot comprehend it.'

Cicely did not return. The first frost of the autumn night fell white on the reddening cherry-leaves and the staired peak of the gable; the cock crew faintly from the distant yard.

> Art looking for the wedded wife, where wedded wife should lie,
> In the bosom of her husband? 'Twas the wont in days gone by.
> Not there, not there—

Cicely found no more that refuge from all tribulation. She sat wringing her hands by the spark on her hearth, as by the ashes in the great chimney of Barne-elms years and years ago; and above in the cold and the gloom the student kept fond, wounded watch and ward over his dishonoured project, his defamed instrument of progress and civilization.

'That matter may remain a space longer in its concealment—I promise no more—but it does not rest with me; like murder, it will out,' said Lee, shortly, when they met in the morning. Cicely did not accept the challenge, not the whole of the cool, clear autumn day, when robins were hopping on

the crisp leaves, children were setting out in riotous bands to glean the fields, and the blood, languid in summer, flowed once more bravely and briskly, and every passenger tramped along gaily and called 'Good day' with a will—not the next day of rain and storm, when all save travellers and aliens drew together to charm the dreary weather with song, and story, and frank racy converse—not the third, when Will Lee and Cicely stole furtively to the Puritan meeting—as Cicely had gone in concealment to listen to the Sunday homily of her own good man, under the state's ban—in God's sight sat side by side and stood together, craving the pardon and blessing of the Great Father. But although the Genevese pastor kept hotly denouncing the sins of the time in a way that might very well increase the self-righteousness and presumption of those innocent and ignorant of such courses, Cicely, who had neither gambled nor drunk, nor sworn profanely, nor stabbed for a wager in indifference to human life and its solemn obligations, did cry piteously behind her muffler, while William Lee sat grim and stiff under a last transformation, no longer the dreaming student, no longer the wild lover, nor the moping man, but as he who would say, 'Thou shalt not quench my light; thou hast rejected thy share in it, but it shall blaze, nevertheless, to all time, for others, if not for thee.'

But that Sunday night, when Lee stood under the red sunset with folded arms, surveying, God knows,

with a taint of idolatry, the foreign work which he had sent from his skilled brain and his awkward hands into the world, a figure passed quickly before him, did not fall at his feet, but clung not so much to his neck as to his knees.

'Oh, Will, Will!' it cried, 'I do not ask thee to pardon me yet, but to hear me confess my great unkindness and unworthiness. I was so proud of thy true love that I came to glory in its sufferings—I delighted to do all for thee and the children, until I grew vain of my own deserts, and impatient of interference. God was giving me up to a proud heart and a lofty spirit, until thou savedst me, dear Will, a second time—a second time. I always craved to be of service and to be depended upon, and I forgot that the feeling might prove my snare, and that a woman's chiefest dower consists of her humility and her modesty. Oh! I have failed, Will, I have failed in the prime jewels of my crown. I know the woman was made for the man, and the woman was in the transgression, and I am but thy poor helpmeet and housekeeper, and all unfit to be thy servant, far less thy breadwinner. I was angered like a silly, petted child, by thy proper, kind reserve, and I did not praise thee, my own Will, for thy wisdom and thy craft, and thy condescension, which will take the world of traders who slighted thee by storm, and shake their kingdom of merchandize and barter about their ears. Oh, Will Lee, Will Lee! that thy attainment should ever be my mortification.'

'Hush, hush! dear soul,' whispered Lee, huskily; 'I was schooling myself to sustain thy unbelief, crediting it to be but a well-merited punishment for my protracted sluggishness and incompetency. Now, it seems it was but the ferment of thy generosity—the excess of thy loyalty, sweet dame, gentle mistress, my old desire and ever new delight,' swore Lee, in the fulness of his heart.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DESTROYERS.

WHAT ails thee, Will? Is there any check in the web—any screw loose? Bide a little, man; Rome was not built in one day. Every right-down sober effort must be handselled by patience. Tell me, can I not aid thee a bit?' urged Cicely, in her own candid, earnest, affectionate character—Lee and she standing in the now much-frequented, eagerly-trodden room, by the treasured loom, more than four or six split-up hosen hanging flauntingly for inspection. 'See, I will sew them up. Ah! Will, man, thou canst not do without a woman's little needle, after all; and I am ready to exhibit to all the world, by the public day, thy first pair, of which thou madest a present to me. 'Fie! thou simple man; they ought to have been a gift to one of the Mistress Dorsets, to Lady Suffolk, or Lady Strange, or the Queen's Grace herself, if she would have honoured thee by accepting them.' And Cicely put out her shapely foot and clean-cut ankle,

cased in those fine hosen—and to do them homage, set off in Cicely's fine old velvet slippers, with their great rose-knots, in place of the heavy wooden shoes with which they had lately trod bricks and boards.

'Oh! those pretty twinkling feet,' said Lee, bowing down pleasantly before them; 'they have marched along over sharp stones for a weary way since I first spied them.'

'Stones are not the worst things, Will. Didst not write out the town's special petition against the noisome, perilous main way, with its dirt-heaps and its jaw-holes. A stone is nothing to a traveller, bating he be not an old heavy monk on a stumbling mule, or a wild young man on a caracolling war-horse ready to charge, or a foolish lass on a frisky palfrey wanting to bolt. But what caused thee sigh, Will? Prithee attempt no more parables, though they clear up into grand truths and rare inventions. Remember thou hast but a faulty, saucy wife, who may earn the branks one day, if thou be'st not more careful; she prizes thy stories beyond lucky strokes and the late arrival of fortune; she loves to receive a secret almost as well as Diccon. The taste must lurk in the blood, Will.'

'This is no secret, most curious dame; but Lazarus Dymmock, the travelled soldier, brought me other word which concerned me, besides his welcome tidings of Master Yorke and thy family.'

'Ah! that was good, Will; they were well and in high repute. My father in the Prince's library,

and Dick in his Musqueteers. And they were so astonied that we had gone together; and my father strokes his beard, and says, 'Well! it will answer, for my dear elder wench was used to serve Philosophy.' And Nan laughs blithely (ah! I hear my gamesome, warm-hearted darling Nan again)—'Say rather, father, that Philosophy has stooped to serve Cicely.' Then Dick teases her, 'Unless she fairly sought him, as thou soughtest me, Nanny;' but Nan does not heed him. 'To think that my Ciss is married years and years ago! Ah! I am main glad that Cicely has got her own learned goodman, to make up for the want of us;' and by that speech, Will, I judge that my wild cousin Dick has matured into a notable kind husband.'

'I believe it, Cicely, for this reason, that Nan is sprung of a stock which furnishes notable good wives. But this word that went to my heart as a schoolman—alake, Cicely, how shall I say it? Master Crichton, that beat all Europe for parts and knowledge, is gone—slain in his glory at Mantua by some fell assassin, hired by the black blood of the fickle, fierce Italians, to revenge the favour shown to him by their Duke.'

'Woe is me, Will! is this what is got by foreign grace?'

'Nay, my love, fear not for thine own. There are too many of them for such an evil trick, and Master Yorke, though an accomplished gentleman, is not so fatally distinguished as the Crichton.

Marry, all Europe may lament him, as all Europe sang his praises—the justest wit, the most faithful memory, the most prodigious industry, and in all martial exercises without a superior. If rival goddesses met to crown his youth, what would they not have done for his maturer years? England, with all the worthies of her Elizabeth's reign, half grudged him to poor Scotland, where Jockey is fain to take to 'lair,' to solace him for his empty pockets and empty stomach—perished in his meridian, envy wept away in pity.'

'All his acquirements expired with him, as the light of a torch is put out,' said Cicely, a little timidly. 'What has come of his mighty application—to what end his brief triumph over the schools? Better he had been lowly, and tasted his cheap, honest pleasures.'

'You err,' Lee interposed imperiously; 'they slew the man, but they could not wipe out his memory. His example lives; he did his best, that others might be shamed if they recorded themselves less than the second-best, even when the Admirable Crichton was the captain of the host.'

'I suppose thou art right, Will,' assented Cicely, meekly enough; 'these matters are above me. I confess, knowledge of itself is a barren, chill height to women. I mind Mother Stacie exalted Chancellor Galfrid just because he paved the streets of Cambridge. For myself, I own I would rather have the simplest benefactor of his kind. I prefer that Wil

Lee should form an era in manufactures, and give back women to their kitchens and still-rooms, their cradles and grandsires' pillows, and what of their needles and huswifes the world cannot do without, seeing that the more hose are worn the more hands will be engaged in creating them—and soon we would have had as many knitters as spinners, and a hue-and-cry for housekeepers, and nurses, and merry maidens to hunt, and hawk, and poise an embroidery frame—than that he should shine a solitary star in the far regions of extreme philosophy, and die by the hands of Italian bravoes.' And Lee, though he had another thought, forgave the feminine weakness and domestic sophistry which had himself and his exploit for a key-note and a rallying cry.

The time was come for the declaration of Lee's invention to the town of Nottingham—in the first place a summons issued to test its truth and witness its products. The news was heard, like any other strange tidings, with surprise, doubt, incredulity, satisfaction, displeasure, hostility, malignity. Flocks crowded to the Lees' house to see with their own eyes the loom that could work meshes, and shape human limbs, granting that they were split-up. They required Lee again and again to explain his theory and illustrate it in practice; they marvelled, they applauded, they objected. 'Odds bobs! what a foot-board! what sleight of hand!' 'How could it be? Whence had the idle hands their mecha-

nical power? the brain, clouded by the heavy mists of learning, the freshness and shrewdness of the artist?' 'What would come of this new appliance and its manufacture?' 'How would it affect trade past as well as to come?' Then followed the inevitable base murmurs of foreign cunning, the Black Art, and Satan, the patron of all proud scholars. The fellow-weavers were particularly susceptible to these whispers—either their authors or their ready imbibers.

The Lees were partly ignorant of these misinterpretations; they sold fewer of their wonderful superlatively woven hosen than they had expected, but they were not troubled; they were certain that a little time would demonstrate the superiority of their property, establish an original branch of trade, and raise them above all farther necessity. They were only half conscious that silence, unfriendly looks and gruff words, were rapidly replacing questions, exclamations, and praise. What had they done that they should prepare for a revolution—another persecution? In their personal vanity or guilelessness, they forgot the cloth-workers of Norwich; or if they did call them to mind at an uncomfortable moment, they scouted the comparison by slandering the sufferers as dull, aggravating Flemings—intruders, intractable, obstinate intruders to boot—while they were true English, a decent young couple, well connected, dignified by misfortune; and they lost sight of the one important fact,

that they were not born burghers of Nottingham, any more than the artisans from Flanders were natives of Norfolk.

The storm burst loose upon them at the end of a wan November day, when there were louring clouds all over the horizon, and the sun's last rays shooting through them and lighting up the stripped landscape with a parting gleam, afforded for a few moments the strange, unnatural contrast of a bright earth—bright with a cold, mocking glitter, and a black heaven threatening fury and retribution.

There had been stirrings and gatherings in those narrow, gable-formed streets of Nottingham all day. Drunken Tom-o'-Lene had been promenaded from gate to gate in the drunkard's cloak or tub, and Amos Hendly, who was given to loud swearing and blasphemy, had been introduced into the whirligig, or great wooden cage, and screwed round on the pivot so as to stop his foul mouth with deadly sickness, but these were too common edifications to warrant the excitement. At nightfall knots of dusty, thread-bespattered, white-faced, bent yet sinewy and determined men, with interlopers ruddy and round-faced, in country jackets and caps, and pert, apron-girdled apprentices, collected fast for mischief, and masters, more cunningly shrouded in mantles, gave stealthy signals to their men, growing like a snowball when February is liberal of her white showers that put the snow-drops out of countenance —make the virgin's flowers but smutty, drooping

blossoms—as an angel from on high may well eclipse the purest, sweetest saint below.

These men of Nottingham had few weapons, but they had their willing shoulders and their itching fists. Well-intentioned, peaceable men were shutting up their shops and hurrying home to their own firesides, their children's prattle, their evening prayers, as a great, overgrown, disorderly band pressed and struggled up the street to Lee's door, and knocked loudly for admittance.

Lattices near were thrown open at the unusual noise—ignorant persons cried, 'What's ado? Have the Catholics murdered the Queen? Is there a new Irish rebellion? Have our sailors found another world? Are the old Plantations lost? Is it joy or sorrow? tell us quick, neighbours.'

'It is only a few on us come to get a lesson at Weayer Lee's loom,' cries out a rough voice, and a chorus of laughter hails the speech.

Lee and Cicely were wide awake now; they heard plainly the thunder on the shaking door—the insolent announcement in so many words. They looked at each other—no means of resistance—no hope in parley. Lee pushed the cradle and Cicely's chair into one corner, and then walked to the door, while Cicely pled nervously—'Speak them, Will. Thou canst convince even dolts; they wont stand one of thy brave, learned speeches.'

'I differ from thee,' Lee answered, 'and I have no mind to cast my pearls before swine. Don't tremble

so, sweetheart; they wont harm thee—I can defend thee. Why, what a bodily coward thou art, Cicely—almost as bad as these ruffians.'

After that, he proclaimed aloud, and coolly for a man whose heart was raging within him, 'Come in, masters, and take your lesson freely,' and flung the door open in their faces, overturning the most forward.

The troop poured in, scarcely more rational and consistent than Christmas mummers, but with an odds of an intent—actually greeting Lee to begin with, in dogged, bashful civility, and calling ostentatiously to Cicely, 'Don't be affrighted, mistress; thou art a good woman and a fair, and it was not for nought that thou carriedst broth to Jasper Roper when he was down with St. Anthony's fire, and slops and kickshaws, wherever thou gottest them, to his puling wife and dying child. By St. Anthony himself when he existed, we don't wonder that thy master is a married clerk; if that were his worst offence he should go scot-free for us.'

Then he had offended, and with that admission, as at the leap of a flood over its wear, the rioters broke into a roar of condemnation, and fought their way upstairs to the loom. Lee followed, and Cicely, forsaking her very nurslings to pluck him back.

The mad mob flung themselves on the little petted machine with shouts of derision and hoots of disgust. 'Show us thy magic, Weaver Lee. Is't thus the treddles go? Lay on the batter, Sim—

drive the shuttle faster and faster. Hurrah! for the trade that is to rob women and their bantlings, and eclipse the good old cloth webs of Nottingham-town, which we have decored many a Christmas-tide and many a May-day—which we had from our fathers, lads, weavers before us, honest men, true workmen, not broken gentry and failed dominies, like Dr. Lee.'

Lee made no interference. There was the labour of many months—what had such a charm for him as his first perfectly disinterested adventure—what was to redeem his wife, and bring plenty and ease in store to ungrateful Nottingham—in utmost peril; and he only smiled in his sore, dark, melancholy scorn.

But Cicely interposed before he could prevent her; she who was such a craven in the face of physical violence. She apprehended the popular error; perhaps she could enlighten their understandings. She might save Will; and her spirit was such at the thought, that if she could have escaped thus far from him, she would have undoubtedly placed herself before his work.

'Men, good folks, kind neighbours,' she cried, with clasped hands, 'I know you would not do us harm, for we have harmed none. We have ever dealt fairly with you; we have ever dwelt peacefully among you, rearing our young sons with your boys to be men of Nottingham like them, when we and our Cambridge descent are alike out of mind. Ah!

you mistake about this invention of Master Lee's, nay, of William Lee's; for we do not want to be any more than our simple selves, and to win reverence only by our good offices. Our Hall and our University are like a dream; we have sunk them, and cast in our lot with the traders—your unpretentious, hard-working classes. Oh! have patience, masters, and I will tell you how I fell into the same delusion, how I accused my man there of plotting against the knitters—the helpless women and children, to lessen the demand for human hands, and aggrandize his own wonderful ingenuity and diligence, until I learnt how foolish and wicked I was, and that God does not give genius for a curse, and that the more the article the greater the request; and how the frost-bit children's toes and the palsied feet of age will both be clothed, soft and warm, and Nottingham will have all the honour. Ah! ye will not hear me.'

'Pax, fax, max, Tilly-vally, mistress, hold thy tongue. It is natural for thee to stand up for thine own; it is an ill quarry that befouls its own nest. We will not hurt thee, so long as we can help it. We have no quarrel with thee. Look thee, it is not we who attack women; nevertheless, thou must not hinder business. Get along, boys, set on—smash away, till neither beam nor band, pin nor joint are left to tell the tale. We will not have mock-weavers, and women's work done by senseless timber, and senseless timber driven by stout men, say I, while

Nottingham be a town,' shouted a great burly giant, round-headed, black-bearded and curled, in a jerkin, soaked and stained—a model of coarse, unhesitating, overbearing strength, yet not without a manly comeliness and a manly good-humour. He was a marked man, and his subordinates took up his verdict with boisterous enthusiasm—'No mock-weavers—Down with the molly-coddles—Up with Rowley the sheep-master. Yo-ho!' And the work of destruction began.

There was a rush at the frail loom. Why, the tenth of them might have done it; and wrenched bars and pins, cracked wood and twisted iron—till the whole measured, much meditated frame, the student's feat—collapsed before the onslaught, a shapeless ruin.

William Lee gave a slight shudder, as if his own bones were racked, and a shrill woman's voice cried despairingly, 'For which of his good works do you stone him?' That—with the wail of the scared children from the room below—that was the rioters' music.

The host looked for a moment in silence, as if content with their success; then the shouts rose again, violent, irregular, exciting; they bantered and boasted each other — they gazed around in search of more fuel for their fire—they commenced to glare on the pale, erect student, unbound and ungagged, yet their spectator, and his faithful wife, when their chief, Rowley the sheep-master,

leapt upon a bench, and addressed them with much gesticulation, and eloquence congenial to them. It needed not much depth or delicacy to comprehend Rowley; but, on the other hand, Rowley did what he said, and that was, to strike the nail on the head in this quarter.

'My mates, our job is finished, and I just think we've finished this stocking-weaving for a while. Don't you agree with me? There, there, don't bellow until you bring down the roof on our heads, and it is pretty ricketty for the shelter of such a woundy smart mechanician—we want no more.' (A thin, keen, cruel voice from a mouth that would have spat fire if it could—'We want the jackanape's fine flesh and blood.') 'No, no, we don't,' growled Rowley, frowning terribly. 'There's not much of that commodity, and you all know I would not have come with you to-night to rob and murder a defenceless lath of a bookworm. Let 'em live, say I; let 'em live. I've no complaint against the gentry or the scholars—I'll not meddle with them if they don't meddle with me. But let 'em keep their own places; don't let 'em put their white hands—look at them, lads, they are as white as those of the mistress—although they're chapped a bit, and notched here and there with slips of the chisel, and hammer, and saw; they'd been in a worse pickle if they had tried the stone-masonry, and let the mell crush them flat as cakes. Let him keep 'em to turn the pages of his books, and try no more weaving, or ploughing,

or tan, or anvil work. He may go to sea like lost Sir Hugh—he was a brave billy—or take to the greenwood, after bold Robin; but I say he's but a pickthank if he meddles with our trades, or aims to out-crow us in them, and deserves but a pick-thank's fate—and he'll meet it, too, without mistake. I suppose all labour comes the same to him, with his plaguy brains; but force is something, ay, force is something, as he sees to-night: and I warn him, quite politely, like a gentleman and a courtier, with my cap in my hand—there, that he'd better not rear again what we have demolished, not within the marshes of Nottingham, not within the bounds of England, or I wis we'll be compelled to circumvent him in another way, that I'll swear he'll not forget. No offence, Dr. Lee; resign thy capriccios, hearken like a Solomon ready to receive instruction, and be an honest man for the time to come. Now, my bully weavers, let us be off, and leave the dame to sweep up the rubbish, and make it serve for her couvre-feu every night this month. What, you are of a different mind? But I tell thee I wonnot suffer more mischief; look ye, I wonnot. We've maintained our rights and quelled an invasion, and zounds, that is enough;' and in spite of many and loud murmurs, and swayings of the mass hither and thither, Rowley, by sheer tyranny in the name of justice, wrenched off his mob, and rid the Lees' house of intruders, and left it without any vestige of outrage, save the mud and mire of numbers of hob-

nailed shoes, the wreck of the loom, and the pale despair on the faces of the inmates. 'Oh, Will, Will,' lamented Cicely, 'the bravest, and most skilful gentleman, who was minded to be their teacher and benefactor—the most excellent machine, curious, and finished, and fit to work a revolution, and no more of it left than a few spars, scarce worth splitting up into firewood. To use you so, my Will; out upon the vile pack.'

But Lee, though gloomy and incensed, was not cowed—he was neither melted by the sight of his wife's tears, nor inflamed by her wrath—he stood yet self-contained, unconquered. 'Stay your lamentation, good wife,' he exclaimed, almost impatiently; 'they have not even slain the man here, and they cannot kill the idea any more than the foreigners could stab the memory that we wot of. Fie, fie, dame; what, whimper for a few rascals who have baulked me once of my gains! My arm, though it is neither so lusty nor so deft as I would have it, will play its part again with good-will and merrily. If my arm be torn from the socket, my tongue will direct another and an abler arm; if my tongue be plucked out and my head punched past redemption, none the less the thought lives and will do its duty, and seek an outlet, and make a path and overcome all obstacles. God's mercy, Cicely, these very fellows will turn and use it—it is create, and it cannot be uncreate neither for them nor for me.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COURT SUIT.

'PLEAD thy cause to the Queen, carry thy difficulties to the Protector of the Realm, work within the shadow of the throne, and no man will dare say straw to thee,' advised Cicely, when—staunch and stubborn as the man's nature was—he paused, harassed by hints and plain threats of fire and sword, injury to house and property, wife and children, if he indulged in the pestilent contumacy of reconstructing his stocking-loom—a piece of independence which, with all his caution and Cicely's care, and Diccon's being flattered and frightened into mouse-stillness, he could not conceal from his enemies, pledged to penetrate his privacy, and revenge his disobedience to their illegal authority and despotic and intolerable prohibition.

'The magistrates be leagued against thee, Will; they will wink at any outbreak, and they may first win the ears of Sir William and the Lord Earl. Address none lower—get word of the Queen.'

'Nay, Cicely, I was once in the Queen's presence, and when I was noticed by her I rejected her grace and offended her goodness—an evil qualification for a petitioner.'

'I know, man, though thou be'st no bragger. Have I not the toy which thy oratory won? I would not dispose of it, for all you bade me years agone, and we have had our pinches, when it cost me a grudge to keep it. Show it her, Will, as a sign, and say that if thou didst not beggar her treasury then, the more reason thou shouldst crave her countenance now.'

'But I was a boaster, Cicely. I vowed to abide by my university, and gather fresh honours for the grey head, and I said to myself, 'if I ever meet those falcon eyn and that brent brow again,' I, too, will wear laurels—greener and more lasting than my royal mistress has to bestow.' Now, though I forsook my mother for the best preferment, the Queen will not judge so—she will count me an ungrateful swaggerer, and liar.'

'Not so, Will, my own Will, thou hast won thy laurels, thy real, enduring laurels. I am thy wife, I am Cicely Yorke, thy first and only love, and I am content for thee. Say what thou wilt, Will, in thy modesty, men will remember Will Lee's name as faithfully as the Admirable Crichton's. And inasmuch as the thwarted, mortified man worked painfully to confer a common obligation and bestow a substantial benefit, while the sun of fortune flashed on the other's splendid

career, too fine to perform ordinary service, or to effect homely ends—to wash the disciples' feet—so I wis Will Lee's will have a more familiar sound, a kindlier echo to every mother's son in the times to come. Thou hast gained laurels for thy university, Will.'

A gleam of humour crossed Lee's grave face. 'What! in leaving her? Like Nicholas West, of King's College, who, when at home, was 'desperately turbulent,' endeavoured to fire the Provost's lodgings, and stole some silver spoons—in short, earned the hangman's brand on his shoulder; but when he went abroad became a new man and Bishop of Ely; and to atone for his early errors, presented fair gifts and much plate to the College, and helped rebuild the Provost's lodgings, to which he was in a sort bound; having once attempted their destruction. A prodigal son have I been also, sweetheart, I do not deny it; and what is worse, I say once more, I cannot repent me of the cause, though I have long bemoaned the effects.'

Lee, after much consideration, adopted his wife's proposal, and on the next Progress which brought Elizabeth within fifty miles of Nottingham, hired a stout nag from mine host of the Bible and the Crown, and rode away in his best doublet and collar, anxiously brushed and brightened by his wife, and followed by her brown eyes as long as she could see him down the street, and by her fond wishes and devout prayers long after he had passed beyond her vision, and out of her ken.

Elizabeth was never inaccessible to her loving subjects. A writer of the period remarks—'She was most easy to be approached; private persons and magistrates, men and women, country people and children came joyfully and without any fear to wait upon her and see her. Her ears were then open to the complaints of the afflicted, and of those that had been any way injured.' 'She took with her own hand and read with the greatest goodness the petitions of the meanest rustics.' 'She was never seen angry with the most unseasonable or uncourtly approach; she was never offended with the most impudent or importunate petitioner. Nor was there anything in the whole course of her reign that more won the hearts of the people than this, her wonderful facility and condescension, and the sweetness and pleasantness with which she entertained all that came to her.' The approach to the Queen's person was especially easy to a gentleman and scholar like Master Lee, who could bespeak the favour of any good-natured or politic courtier in proper terms, and was sure to do credit to any patron who marshalled him into the royal ring.

The last time Lee saw his sovereign—the joy of her people's eyes—was after the solemn play in the dim, religious light of the old hall of Trinity; now it was not within stone walls, however lofty their pillars, or fair their carved screens, but beneath the great spreading boughs in the wild green bosky park of one of those halls which Elizabeth loved to visit—

where she received the splendid hospitality of her nobles, and had an opportunity of greeting frankly and intimately her faithful commons.

Who has not heard of Kenilworth, and Eltham, and Nonsuch, and Coudray? Kenilworth drawn by a wizard's pen. The great hall of Eltham, one hundred feet in length, with its beautifully-carved roof —one of those roofs plated like fans, and descending in knobs and bosses. Nonsuch, with its double courts, and gatehouses, and four turrets; its two stories, half stone half wood — the latter 'richly adorned and set forth, and garnished with variety of statues, pictures, and other antique forms of excellent art and workmanship' — those basso-relievos being simply composed of rye dough; and its peculiar boast—its two slender turrets, five stories high, with lanterns a top. Coudray, with its entrance-hall commanded by a buck of brown wood, as large as life, bearing on its shoulders the shield of England, and beneath it that of Sir Anthony Brown, and ten other bucks in various attitudes, and the size of life, keeping it company; and in addition, a parlour hung round with the works of Hans Holbein.

Modern fashion has made the age wonderfully at home amid the quadrangles, the clock towers, the clusters of chimneys, the pointed gables, and the preponderating oriel windows causing the complaint even then that men built palaces of glass; but the copy is but a copy still—too laboured and fanciful for a less picturesque generation.

Certainly, men do not venture on a corresponding fac-simile of the princely gaieties of the noble Montacute and Arundel—the pageants where always a river god, a salvage man, or a wood-nymph started up to greet their liege lady and lay at her feet the sovereignty and the treasures of wild wood and water, joustings, riding at the ring, shooting at the butts, the baiting of a bear, excursions to islets and banqueting-houses composed of oddly-blended materials, velvet foot-cloths, silken curtains, fountains of wine and statues of Portingal sugar-work—the whole stuck round with roses, marigolds, and July flowers, and perhaps, in conclusion, the coarse, grotesque buffoonery of 'a merry marriage.' 'The sixteen wights,' the bridegroom, 'in his father's tawny worsted jacket, a straw hat with a capital crown steeple-wise on his head; a pair of harvest gloves on his hands, as a sign of good husbandry; a pen and ink-horn at his back, for he would be known to be bookish; lame of a leg, that in his youth was broken at football; well-beloved of his mother, who lent him a muffler for a napkin, that was tied to his girdle for (fear of) losing it.' The bridemaids of thirty years old a-piece; a freckle-faced, red-headed lubber with the bride-cup; the 'worshipful bride, thirty-five years old, of colour brown bay, not very beautiful indeed, but ugly, foul, and ill-favoured;' and lastly, many other damsels 'for bridemaids that for favour, attire, for fashion and cleanliness, were

as meet for such a bride as a tureen-ladle for a porridge-pot.'

Probably it is well done to omit these galas, for what pleased the simple, reverent eyes of the peers, and the wonder-loving, fun-relishing gaze of the people of the past, might scarcely suit the wisdom and the wants of the present, and the revival here might prove but a mockery and a grievance.

The second, and, thank God, the happier Elizabeth, is met but by courtiers, gentlemen in broadcloth, and graceful ladies in muslin, and artisans and labourers in coarser, shabbier editions of the suits of their superiors, and the Secretary of State is ready for the petitions, and no compliment more costly or unique thought of for the centre and mark of all eyes, than the keys of an honorary city-gate or a fast-fading bouquet.

Even in Scotland, which both the son of the bricklayer and the hero of Boswell hated so hugely that one must believe it the spite of lurking love, it is questionable whether caution, shyness, rationality, and fear of ridicule, would not carry the day, so that a Queen dear as Victoria might not have what is barely her due—a gilt basin on Lauder Bridge, a red rose at Ormiston, a buck in 'the cleugh,' a bowl of oatmeal brose from the Sprotts of Sprott.

Elizabeth had been walking and conversing gaily with a train of her gentlemen and ladies, and sat in a chair on the terrace, enjoying the view, and resting after a trial of wit with mettle that matched her

own, when Lee was again brought before her, and recommended to her notice.

Lee was older and wiser grown than when last he entered that circle, and what the lad, in his grand self-conceit, had viewed unabashed, the man in his humility did obeisance to in earnest admiration. There were the men of deeds, the men of posterity, some with light tongues, and languishing forms, and unconscious hearts, but still no carpet-knights; brave soldiers who fought like lions in the Low Countries, noble adventurers, who prayed with their leaders that they might sail an English ship in the Pacific—that highway of Spain; accomplished gentlemen, who wrote with Wotton and Harrington; sagacious statesmen, who reasoned with Cecil, and Walsingham; and Christian prelates and divines, who but threw their mantles on their successors—holy George Herbert and Jeremy Taylor; and there were additions to the number since the Cambridge scholar first beheld them—stars of the first magnitude in the glittering galaxy.

There were two gentlemen about to become country neighbours in Ireland, both poets, though no rivals; both soldiers when need was; one a bold, gay sailor; both young and handsome men, with the beauty alike of body and spirit, but with a distinction between them.

The heart that broke after the burning of Kilcolman Castle, and the solitary penury in London, was in a casket of flesh, mild in its manliness, 'a

little man who wore short hair, a little band, and little cuffs,' with a touch of pensiveness, a lingering thought of the Red-cross Knight, and Una with her 'weary feet,' about his fair, sunburnt face, and his mouth soft and sweet as Will Shakspeare's under his fierce moustache, though he was then sunning himself in the beams of his Gloriana, conning his odes to the friendly Lord Grey, and the kind, flattering Court dames, and rejoicing in the sympathy and friendship of his Astrophel; and far away, over land and sea, the Mulla still flowed peacefully beneath its green alders, and dimpled its broad lake, and his Elizabeth was yet to murmur to its accompaniment his 'sponsal verse' in the sweetest bower of the old keep of the Desmonds.

The companion spirit which disappointment could not daunt, nor captivity shake, which philosophized, read, and wrote in a right king-like equanimity and cheerfulness, was set in as bright a chasing, as cloudless a brow, as daring an eye, as merry a cut of beard and curl of locks as ever surrounded mortal jewel.

There, too, was England's Petrarch and Bayard, with his womanly delicacy of feature, and his artist's richness and quaintness of costume, with his placid and abstracted air, as if he were sitting cross-legged on a mossy bank at Wilton, imagining 'the Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia,' just after he had refused the crown of Poland, and beaming over the whole youthful face (for woe's me! there were but thirty old men numbering the years of the hero, and walking

before that bier, where all England were the mourners) one of the secrets of this strange coolness in a hot-tempered, aspiring, but not ambitious man—the pure affection which links him arm-in-arm in the Penshurst portrait with his younger brother Robert, joins his literary fame for ever with that of his beloved sister Mary, and brings moisture to the eyes which read his father's fond praise. 'The rare ornament of his age.' 'The very formula that all well-disposed young gentlemen of the Court do form their life by.' 'He hath the most virtue that I ever found in any man.' Sir Philip could not have looked very different when carried off his last field with that bullet above the knee, and his sword—the handle alone sixteen inches long, spikes on each side—dropping from his nerveless hand, and his eyes, eager with his death thirst, falling compassionately on the wounded soldier, until he put aside the coveted draught of water, and said, in his own gracious, considerate, self-denying words—the very echo of the man's nature—'Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.'

There was John Lylly, to whom these gallants owed a mingled kind of gratitude for teaching them the tender, chivalrous affectation of his euphuism; and standing by the pink of fanciful spiritualism, in one of the broad contrasts of life, the strong-marked, long-faced, weather-beaten, massive, blunt sailor, Drake, a giant there, his scarf across his broad chest, and the Queen's medallion hanging above it—

indefatigable as when he conquered the great Cacafuego and coasted the world, gruff as when he bade the bowlers play on the match on the Plymouth Hoe, as they had time both to finish the game and defeat the Armada, returned from one of his 'singeings of the King of Spain's beard,' plain as his birth and his calling, with a child-like frankness in his sagacity vaunting openly his far voyages, thanking God for the sight of a gibbet on the wild American shore as a sign that there had been Christians there before him, assuming the arms of the poor knight of his name, and when the latter cried out piteously to Elizabeth, receiving the ship and the ruff, and the arms of the provincial Drake 'hung by the heels,' but, oh! triumph of virtue, with all the license of his buccaneering expeditions, his bold temper, and his free manners, as spotless in life, he and every rough man of his expedition, as the refined, cloud-capped Lylly.

Several paces behind Drake stood young Cavendish, the salt-water not yet more than tempering the courtier and gallant, and with the same nervous rage twisting his silken moustaches, raising his perfumed hair, and contracting his brows, which dictated his proclamation that 'seventeen caracs he had plundered and sunk, and every town and village he had come to, he had sacked and burnt;' and when fickle Fortune veered, and Cavendish was homeward-bound barren of fruit, that same fury turned in upon his own proud heart, and gnawed and tore until he

perished on the high seas, in the meridian of his ardent manhood.

Again, to the left of the Queen was learned Roger Ascham, her pleased preceptor, and gentle Bishop Jewel, who would believe in witches, probably to account for the wickedness which he could not help seeing around him. There was the bishop's friend, equally gentle Hatton, the saraband-dancing chancellor;

> Full oft within the spacious walls,
> When he had fifty winters o'er him,
> My grave Lord-keeper led the brawls—
> The seals and maces danced before him.
>
> His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,
> His high-crowned hat and satin doublet,
> Moved the stout heart of England's Queen,
> Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it;

the most devoted of Elizabeth's servants, and the only one who remained a bachelor for her sake. There was the most careless and scornful of the set—whose black eye was never tamed, whose heart was 'cold as the winter in Muscovy,' who did not scruple to offend Elizabeth by his preference for the rude camp over the graces and glories of the court, Peregrine, Lord Willoughby, son of the Duchess of Suffolk and her Bertie, born in the church-porch at Wesel, reared in exile, to whom Leicester gave the testimony 'there is not a properer gentleman in the world than the Lord Willoughby,' who died Governor of Berwick, but who was now preparing to sail for Denmark to invest the King with the Order

of the Garter. Unlike either Hatton or Willoughby was Sir Charles Blount, afterwards Lord Mountjoy, whose face made his fortune when he was a younger brother, and marred it when he was the head of his house, and it was 'a sweet face,' shaded with 'brown hair,' and he was further 'of a most neat composure, and tall in his person.'

Some faces Lee missed. Leicester's, as the Lord Earl was starting to act as Generalissimo in the Low Countries, as if he and Elizabeth had indeed been born on the same day, at the same hour, under a like planet, and where Lettice Knollys, as his acknowledged wife, was to commit the offence and enormity of riding in a caroche with a suite of ladies, like the Queen's Majesty of England. Other fair ladies had vanished with her, but their places here were filled by fresh beauties, more notable, if possible, than before. Conspicuous among them was the English Laura—if Sidney was the English Petrarch — sadly for her, already other than Lady Penelope Devereux, a pale, pure, broad-browed woman, with the wondrous union of fair yellow hair and deep black eyes. Mystery of mysteries, after building up Sidney in his innocency, living to be the unacknowledged wife of Mountjoy! Woe is me! in English literature Stella has been a hapless name. There was comely, prosperous Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford, Ben Jonson's patroness; rosy Elizabeth Vernon, wife of the accomplished Earl of Southampton; a portly and lean trio—my Lady

Strafford, the Queen's great friend, and the Ladies Winchester and Warwick, her bedchamber women. There was Catherine, Countess of Nottingham, with her weak mouth and cowardly vacillating eyes, she who kept back Essex's ring; and there was her sister, the younger Lady Scrope, who flung a second ring from the palace window to her brother Cary, to bid him mount and ride to the next heir. There was the wan, drooping young sister of the Earl of Huntingdon, come of the blood royal, on that account soon after fixed upon to stop the maw of the barbarian of Muscovy, as the English wife he coveted, but saved from the terrible exaltation to the joint sovereignty of those vast, bleak domains by the honest womanliness of Elizabeth, in the teeth of her interests, on the discovery of the grisly Czar's unlimited privilege of divorce, and the disinclination of the bride and her brother to the great match. Little doubt Elizabeth practised that preposterous habit of opposing marriages—her sour grapes—but it does not seem to be on record that she ever compelled one.

There sat Elizabeth herself, with her small white hands, and her profuse bronzed hair, pearls the size of a bean round her white silk mantle, a ruby as big as a tennis-ball at her throat, a little cap so enchained with gold and encrusted with jewels that it shone like a crown, bearing a single chieftain's feather, on her head, Elizabeth, before whom, when she passed to chapel, 'wherever she turned her face

everybody fell on their knees,' the flash of whose eyes inspired as much awe as the thunder of her father Henry's voice—Elizabeth, the hardly-used, much-suffering princess, the defender of Protestantism, the wise, witty, graceful professor of the highly-prized learning of her day, the faithful mother of her people. No wonder Lee bent his head as well as his knee, inclined his soul as well as his body, and forgot to mark the changes on the noble face before him, the hardening, and yet the gathering weakness. Already the stately spirit had felt the first throes of the pang which made her cry out in her last violence, 'Affection! it is false.' Already the passionate nature groaned over the void which no honour could supply, and demanded compensation, clutched at the true and false flattery, the deep, fond homage, and the heartless, selfish subserviency which surrounded her evermore.

'Greet thee fairly, Master Lee,' exclaimed Elizabeth courteously, in answer to the presentation, and distinguished by the strong discernment and retentive memory which attends on minds like hers in high places, she added inquisitively, after a moment's pause, 'Ere we hear thy petition, sir, we would say that we err greatly if we have not set eyes on thee before, on some fitting occasion.'

Lee's heart fell within him; not that he had intended any disguise, and he had known enough of concealments, but he had a sure instinct that the recognition of his identity would not serve his hopes.

'Please your Grace, at Cambridge, in the great hall of Trinity, after the acting of a certain play,' he said with irresistible reluctance.

'Prithee, man, it was surely no treason,' exclaimed Elizabeth, impatiently, while she made an effort to recall the circumstances fully. 'Ha!' she cried, 'my clerk of Trinity, who forswore my favour for his book-shelves and his University. Good lack, we should venerate learning, sir; but she hath not thriven with thee as with our worthy Master Roger, here; he is a hale man of his years, and thou art but a worn shadow of the studious youth whom we did so ill as to tempt from his vocation,' she concluded, half ironically, half haughtily.

Lee remained silent, more capable of solving a hard problem in mathematics, and construing the worst entanglement in the dead languages, or inventing a new and complicated machine, than of extricating himself politically from a dilemma with a jealous woman which threatened to dash his fortunes.

'How now, Master Lee,' continued Elizabeth, in that bantering tone which none liked to provoke who depended on her mercy or liberality; 'hath thy mistress proved unkind that thou comest at last craving my notice? Dost know thou canst not have two masters, nay, nor two mistresses? Say you not so, my Lord Bishop?'

'If the mistresses be so congenial as thy Grace and our beloved Alma Mater, I should not thus apply

the text,' amended Jewel, readier to risk Court smiles than to cease to be a peacemaker; while Lee had not even the adroitness or audacity to escape the consequences of his scrape by announcing, 'I tried two mistresses, and therefore am I here,' and so to disturb the Queen's gravity, tickle her strong sense of humour, and be pardoned as an arrant knave and good-for-nothing fellow, before she recovered herself.

Lee, after labouring under the burden of the Queen's scorn and lurking displeasure, found no other freedom than to confess solemnly and deliberately, 'Your Grace, I was a Fellow, and I married and forfeited my privileges.'

'Now, by Heaven,' blazed the Virgin Queen, 'this passes patience. Is my condescension to reward thy dishonesty? Am I myself so amorous, and such a slave to wedlock, that my subjects expect me to bless their hot, shameful vows, and foolish, wicked contracts? Go, sir; thou hast forgotten thyself, and mistaken thy Sovereign.'

Lee caught her skirt in a paroxysm of pain and sorrow; he lost sight of his invention, he remembered but himself and Cicely, and the degradation and misery of their condemnation by England's Elizabeth.

'Madam, have mercy. She was as an orphan, and alone. What could I be but her protector?'

This was a happier address. An unconscious blow struck at the rock which held hidden in its

bosom gushing fountains. Elizabeth wavered; she half turned. The angry flush faded from her cheek. The royal lady before Lee knew, none so well, what it was to be 'almost and altogether' an orphan, forlorn, aspersed, in the utmost distress; yet she resisted the impulse, and even seized upon a new root of bitterness.

'Under our sceptre no modest maiden need fall into such straits. Own, rather, she had yellow hair, and a cunning tongue, and now, doubtless, she is an idle slut, or a scolding vixen, or worse — I will not soil my lips with such terms — and proves punishment enough for thy headiness and thy wantonness. Yet count thyself in luck, sirrah! that we send thee not to durance for intruding such well-deserved reprisals on our ears—pure, we trust God. My Lord Dacre, we will in from cold air and presumption.'

'Your Grace is mistaken,' persisted Lee, and speaking with sparkling eyes, and without making way for Elizabeth to rise, though she spurned with her foot, and a sudden chorus, 'Away, sir, away,' 'Remove the varlet,' 'Give him over to the grooms,' with the eyes of the courtiers bent on him compassionately, wonderingly, indignantly, apprised him of his portion. 'I ask nothing for myself, but claim thy justice for my wife. I declare, before Heaven, she is as snow to the black earth in opposition to what you have divined her. My errors have fatally compromised her, since Majesty itself thus unwit-

tingly maligns her—a noble, tender girl, too self-sacrificing, too devoted for my selfishness and covetousness—shall I hear even my Queen condemn her?'

'Now God ha' mercy,' protested the Queen, 'this stubborn man will enter the lists with me about this frail damsel or dame, who is clean beyond my ken. I cry her pardon.' But though she still spoke mockingly, her anger was abated, the courage and warmth of Lee's defence had driven it back, and touched her nobility and her humanity; the next moment she added candidly and magnanimously, like a Queen as she was, 'After all, Master Lee, thou art not wrong in spending thy manhood to shield her weakness. We pass over thy rudeness for thy truth—a rare quality, alack! in any day. Hear you, Sir Philip, we except you, and you too, Sir Walter, so thy hand seek thy sword.'

'Nay, your Majesty, it is more likely my tongue will seek an oath of confirmation.'

'Besides,' ended the Queen, with a short sigh, 'the deed is done; keep thy dame, in wedlock's name, and continue to think much of her. We have nothing now to say against it.'

Let us make merry at Elizabeth's stubborn but transparent aversion to the various unions of her attendants, only let us not forget to supplement our jests with the honest and honourable fact that for a proud, wilful woman she signalized herself quite as much by her repeated and even speedy acts of inconsistent oblivion passed on those flagrant offences,

(always excepting the cases of the Greys), once they were beyond revocation.

Lee was now willing to end the audience, although he had gained nothing of what he had expected, but the Queen, exceeding in her leniency, addressed him again freely and gaily.

'In verity we wish thee joy of this Penelope—this treasure of a housewife, Master Lee; nevertheless, we must grant, for example's sake, she was won unfairly.'

Lee bowed profoundly. 'Truly, she is my best friend, my dearest companion, madam,' he declared seriously.

'Out upon thee,' exclaimed the Queen, prolonging the argument with secret interest, and affected pleasantry, 'thou art too enamoured for a scholar—or is she so very good? My lords and gentlemen, hearken to this prodigy.'

'Rarely good,' Lee assured her, without wincing; 'true and loving, well-nurtured, of excellent parts, sweet and sound, of most pleasant conditions—ever nourishing a heroic hope, after the brightest pattern in the realm, yea, in this round globe.'

'Gainsay him, Master Drake,' appealed the Queen, gratified by the earnest compliment, 'thou who hast encircled this vast sphere as I girdle my finger with this ring, and seen all its monsters, its syrens, its mermaidens; but good my master,' she continued, ere Drake could growl forth an emphatic negative, opposing Lee this time very graciously,

'thou art halting in thy similes—that is, if thy high-flown speech affects us as we credulously and conceitedly suppose—we would like thee to understand we are not fashioned for any man's mistress.'

This time Lee was prompt, for he spoke from his full heart. 'Pardon, gracious lady, if thou hadst willed, or didst still will, to receive a lord—would he not find the most dignified the most deft, the wisest the most forbearing, the highest, in spite of a paradox, the lowliest? No merit dwelleth in weakness.'

'Thou art right there, thou gallant husband,' said Elizabeth, sighing, as she had done before, but more deeply, and therefore more covertly; 'and thinkest thou really that we who are likened to the lion and the eagle, virgin though we be, could ever become yielding as the dove? Vanity! vanity! but if we had descended from the height where God hath set us over our people, and mated us till death to them alone, methinks we would have asked, in our own degree, as loyal a spouse, as gifted a gentleman as Master Lee.' The Queen waved her hand to conclude the audience, but on the instant deferred her purpose. 'We must be guilty of an omission. Our liege here had some other cause for seeking our face than to confess his follies and faults, or even to make these gentlemen's ears itch with the tale of his happiness. Have a care, Master Lee, thou art imprudent with thy praises. Unless we lay our urgent commands on them, which we do within this hour,

a score of our sworn knights and cavaliers will be deserting our footstool, like another throne of Guenever, and alighting upon Cambridge to spy out thy Philoclea. Speed with thy prayer, sir; tell us, what wouldst thou more with thy Queen? An invention, Sir John? A patent, hintest thou? Well done, Master Lee; now this was employing well thy connubial bliss, and turning thy talents in all directions, as our ships explore every sea. Fie upon it! we do hate mere idle dalliance.' And her Grace looked daggers at certain giddy young courtiers, and deluded maids of honour.

'Please your Grace, now did not this Master Lee constitute himself a weathercock?' objected a handsome, coxcombical youth, saucily.

'With your Grace's leave, may I introduce myself?' pressed frank, enthusiastic Sir Walter, unable to keep back; 'this good gentleman and I will be friends in a trice. Doubtless he has discovered something of importance, and which will do him main credit. Sir, craving her Majesty's permission, I am Walter Raleigh, of Devonshire, a little addicted to sciences and physics.'

'Silence all,' proclaimed Elizabeth, with liveliness and decision. 'Am I not shamed by my disorderly court and malapert guard? Were it not that the country air hath entered your brains, and driven you all astray, rendering you as unmannerly as Hodge and his fellows, I would have my Lord Marshal with his baton to mend your bearings.

My lord, concerning the weathercock—'Set a thief to catch a thief'—we hope your hundred coats of arms do not pale at the homeliness of the proverb; in excuse, our own are somewhat more fully charged, and they are not offended by mother wit and the Saxon tongue. We will speak you in Latin the next time, and send your schoolmaster to the Tower if you halt in the answer. Sir Walter, we are informed that thy shield is to include a certain muddy mantle—our King-at-Arms permitting—so we have reason to imagine thy niceness will not be easily hurt. Surely, no; for thou art constantly dabbling in smoke, and soot, and poisonous stuff. Stick to thy rapier or thy pen, my knight; leave thy metals and drugs for sickness, or for age, or for the dulness of two turtle-doves shut up for life in the same cage.'

'Your Grace's counsel is law; but I do not desire a better diversion for a cage, unless, indeed, the sight of the sun.'

'In verity, thou wouldst even sing in a cage, thou ruffling bird, and that is no light commendation,' said her Majesty, slowly, thinking of Woodstock, and Hatfield, and the Tower, where gallant Raleigh has left his chamber, seeing that a king came to England, who could keep 'such a bird in such a cage.'

'Master Lee, thou hast asked our assistance, and we will see to it. We love art, though we have no time for a personal knowledge of its points. No

magnificent, forward knight and gentleman must count on superseding us in the best-beloved office of our crown, save that of conferring mercy when it squares with justice. What shall we do for thy experiment or performance? What wouldst thou? Shall we order a grant of angels, though our Treasurer shakes his head? Or wilt thou have a monopoly? Or shall we appoint thee our own representative in the business?'

'Your Grace is too good, too bountiful,' protested Lee, 'and it is an humble but sure attainment, for which a simple student will be thankful, but which those knights and nobles may despise. It is a stocking-loom, to weave looped hose as quickly and cheaply as men weave cloth.'

'Now, it is not beneath our notice, Master Lee,' avouched the Queen quickly, surprised, but not discomfited, as men are when mountains have been made out of mole-hills, nor inclined to titter, as were the frivolous in the group behind her chair. 'A worthy attempt, a useful contrivance, something that will help us in keeping our own with Flanders. Master Lee, we are beholden to you. What! are these specimens? Marry, they put out of countenance every knitter in the kingdom, and we consider ourselves no mean judge, behind no dame in England. They are equal to my Spanish hose, sir; as flexible as fine. We accept them with hearty thanks, and will wear them, on our very next dance, to thy honour. Master Lee, we enjoin thee

to establish the trade. Thou shalt have our seal upon it, our custom, and support. By my word, no new branch of industry but shall feel our nursing care. If more is wanted, confer with the Chancellor. Sir Christopher, you will give all heed to the traders.'

'Long live Elizabeth, the mother of the middle classes,' shouted Lee, waving his cap.

'The mother of all classes, sir, so help her God,' corrected Elizabeth, as she rose at length, and passed on, the first of her splendid train.

Again, in the course of his life, lofty looks fell thick on the scholar, but this time they were without envy. Master Lee enjoyed a happy immunity, a blessed peace and safety in the Queen's gracious assent to his application. None present could conceive of rivalry with the trader to whom her Grace awarded patronage.

With one exception; Sir Walter lingered behind. Sir Walter caught Lee unceremoniously by the shoulder, while his bright eyes spoke before his glib tongue.

'How was it, Master Lee? Wilt do me the grace to come to the chamber where I am lodged, and drink a cup of clary with me, and give me the particulars? How are the loops managed? I have tried my hand at the old chain-armour—not caring, between us two, not being able to afford that a butterfly in peace should be slain on a field of battle, as a gilt chrysalis. I have made a little engine or two. I dearly love inventions, in your ear; for her Majesty

will not have it so. If I was at home, I could show you a book or two—soberly, they are the making of the world, glum statesmen and even sovereign beauty would go hang without them—and some rare curiosities picked up far and near. But I pray you, come now, good Master Lee, you must delay for refreshment anyhow, that the character of the castle where her Grace rests may not be impaired by thy fasting. I see the major domo seeking you e'en now, but you have put yourself in my charge. This way, this way, worshipful Master Lee.'

It was starry night before Lee started on his journey home, pricking his horse to make up for lost time, humming a roundelay as he had not done above once in his life before. Not the less glad for this cause, that he had rather suffered wrong, and had not broached the unpalatable topic of his townsmen's turmoil, or brought down upon them heavy vengeance. Stopping at the first town, after dawn, to fling away his husbanded money on bow and arrows—almost the only ones left in use—for the lad, and an heir's cap for the infant, and an extravagant pair of blue gauze wings to back Cicely's best ruff—notwithstanding Cicely had renounced finery since their deep poverty—and the eccentricities of this mad fashion struck even his unpractised eye and accommodating taste. Cicely accepted these gifts, not as she had done the old ones, but with fondest pride and gratitude, as arles of his success and tokens of his loving remem-

brance, and wore and became these fantastical encumbrances marvellously! marvellously!

Cicely had been watching for his jaded horse long hours, hovering about the entrance to the court of 'the Bible and the Crown,' singing (in spirit) with exultation, her version of some such melody, with the faint ring of Paradise—

His very foot has music in't,
When he comes up the stair.

She had her house 'swept and garnished;' she displayed her purest and most comely matronhood; her pretty boys were in their freshest busking—

And all to please my ain gudeman,
For he's been lang awa.'

To his Cicely, Lee's absence had been counted by hopes and fears, longings and yearnings, until the two days mounted to months and years; and the husband, father, head—the peerless scholar and the true love had in truth been 'lang awa' in that sweet calendar.

When William Lee, under the Queen's all-powerful protection, remodelled and improved his loom, he caused to be carved on the beam, with no reflection on the Queen's bounty, but with a private interpretation, a muscular hand surrounded by his scroll—'More faithful than favoured.'

THE END.

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016